

The Pioneer® SD-P40 is not a projection television. It is a projection *monitor*. The first of its kind.

And in one masterstroke, all—not some, but *all*—of the compromises associated with projection television have been eliminated.

In fact, the SD-P40 is not merely far

For the first time, a true skin tone is achieved in the presence of a vivid green. At last, color compromise is eliminated.

The exceptional performance of the Pioneer SD-P40 is the result of several major technological advances developed by Pioneer engineers over the last 3 years.

PIONEER INTRODUCES THE WORLD'S FIRST PROJECTION MONITOR.

superior to *any* other conventional projection system, it is also superior to all but a few direct-view monitors.

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The horizontal resolution on the SD-P40 is more than 450 lines.

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Silicone rubber

The "Liquid Lens" Technique.

Conventional

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And new High-Focus CRTs utilize not one but three electron lenses. These, combined with a newly developed Linear Tracking Focus System, result in a focal performance superior to conventional CRTs.

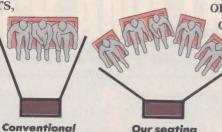
THE HEART OF A SOPHISTICATED AUDIO/VIDEO SYSTEM.

Inputs are provided for a LaserVision player

and two videocassette recorders, in addition to 139 cable-capable channels with 10-key direct access. There's an MTS decoder for stereo/SAP broadcasts, and a simulated-stereo processor. There's a built-in high-powered 12W + 12W

amplifier, with two built-in 65/16-inch speakers. There's a monitor output, and a TV output. There's even a variable audio output that lets you control volume through your hi-fi system by remote control.

In fact, the entire system is controlled by



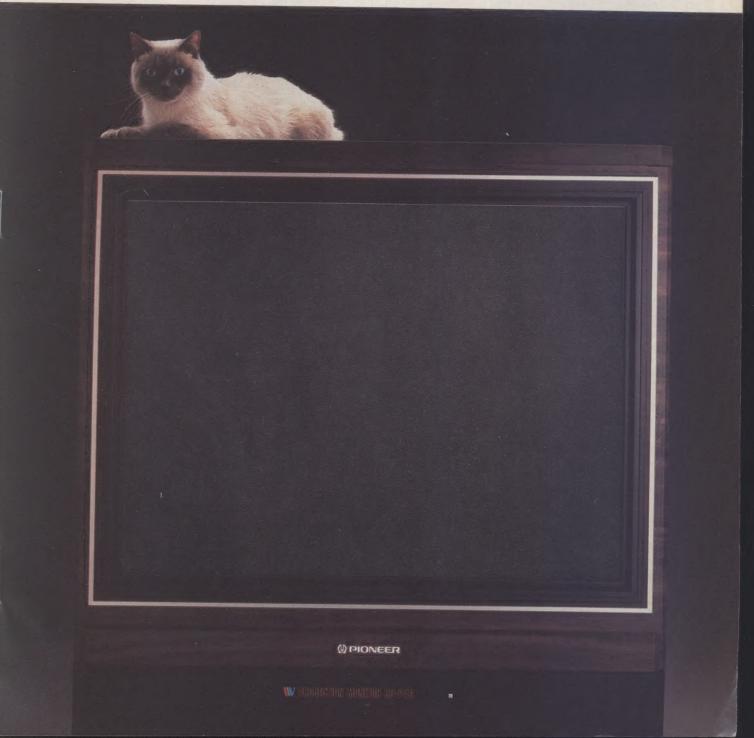
Our seating
Finally, you can sit anywhere.

one 54-function System Remote control (which will also control Pioneer LaserDisc™ and VCRs bearing the SR symbol).

We could go on and on.
Suffice it to say, all you have to
do is see the Pioneer SD-P40
once, and you will suddenly
understand the difference

between the world of projection televisions and the only projection monitor in the world.





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Video Vacation Special

How I Shot My Summer Vacation

See the World for \$24.95

Ich Bin Ein Berlitzer

Lights! Camera! Bubbles!

Super Systems

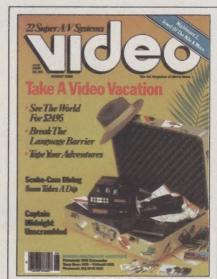
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About the Cover. Before you finish packing for that big trip, we've got a suitcase full of useful video ideas. Photograph by Robert Lewis.

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Ed Meese, Peeping Tom

Now that home video has established itself as a major phenomenon in America, it's easy to forget from whence we came. We built this industry on X-rated tapes. Like it or not, if it weren't for porn stars like Marilyn Chambers and Traci Lords, there's a good chance we wouldn't have Hi-Fi HQ VCRs. Yet, once again, adult tape-indeed, the freedom to watch what you want in the privacy of your bedroom—is under siege by the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography.

At presstime, we had not seen a copy of the draft report, but the final will have been made public as you read this. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) sued the government to get the draft and at least one copy was "made available" to The New York Times. (The Commission refused to send us a copy or comment on it.) The first rumblings from Edwin Meese III's 11-member panel are little short of horrifying. The panelists conclude that the country needs new, tougher laws governing pornography. The report patly integrates sex and violence, reversing the wisdom of a similar government panel convened 16 years ago. Most disturbing, the Commission subtly coerced conservative and middle-American business interests into participating in a campaign of censorship. Playboy and Penthouse are no longer for sale in 7-Eleven convenience stores, and both magazines are suing the United States over the alleged "blacklisting."

Both publishers feel there is a virtual conspiracy by our government to use economic pressure to foist its conservative view of pornography and crime on the American public. Only a court can adjudicate that accusation. But the real issue is where do we draw the line about what's acceptable? What's next? Will local communities ban general interest magazines with risque Calvin Klein underwear

The sense of coercion is quickly traveling to America's communities. Recently Barry Lynn, an ACLU lawyer who has become the Commission's leading opponent, toured South Carolina video stores. Their message was clear: local sheriffs are browsing in stores "suggesting" that dealers take the adult tapes out of their inventories. This is intimidation, and it's ugly—perhaps uglier than the spate of civil suits against porn purveyors because the threat is less visible.

The Meese Report is limned with references to home video because of the VCR's great contribution to viewing freedom. "There is frequent discussion and mention of video tapes in the draft," according to Lynn. "They seem to think of it as a greater threat because of its wide availability." What especially irks Lynn and other critics is the shoddiness of the research in the report. "The Commission is taking a dab of science and mixing it with a pound of their own biases," Lynn said. "Our data are inconclusive," warned Edward Donnerstein, a psychologist at the University of Wisconsin, whose work was heavily relied on as source material by the Commission. "Our research is being over generalized and misinterpreted."

In short, the report is a "moral tract" rather than a "legal or scientific" document, says Lynn. It has long been axiomatic in America that it is unwise as well as impossible to legislate morality. If we are to believe the Meese Commission, then we will accept the argument that rapes and beatings of women are often committed by sexually frustrated men who rent and view adult tapes.

The Meese Commission echoes what Andrea Dworkin, Women Against Pornography, and other radical feminists have been saying for years: X-rated material degrades women, exploits them and wreaks havoc in society. Ironically, two of the four women on the Meese panel have written dissenting opinions. We'd like to applaud the independent and courageous thinking of Ellen Levine, editor of Woman's Day, and Dr. Judith Becker, a psychology professor at Columbia University. "No self-respecting investigator would accept conclusions based on such a study," they wrote. "We still know too little about why many men and some women use and enjoy pornography, if and why women's and men's sexual arousal patterns to pornography differ.

What can we do? Write angry letters to our legislators about how we object to the government taking away our inalienable right to watch what we want whenever we want on our VCRs.

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Photo/Herbert Migdoll
Monitor picture The Joffrey Ballet in John Cranko's, "The Taming of the Shrew."

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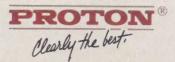
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Fast Forward

Late-Breaking News

Doubledecked Dilemma

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Don't look for any Translators at your local electronics store soon. The Translator is a VCR with side-by-side VHS and 8mm cassette ports that Samsung, the Korean VCR giant, briefly considered introducing. The doubledecked Translator can record from either deck, play back from both, dub in either direction, and feed two TVs at once, manually or by a wireless remote control.

Even though it's a basic two-head VCR, with few of the usual features videophiles demand, its mere appearance in this country sent a chilling shudder through the piracy-sensitive video community. The Motion Picture Association of America and its member film studios fear the Translator's interpretive powers will foment illegal dubbing. Samsung responded to the criticism by downgrading the Translator from prototype to fond wish on the eve of its display at a recent trade show. (The exhibit unit didn't even work.) Sharp suffered a similar fate last year with the two-well VHS VCR it sold briefly in the Middle East. Sharp consumer interest may turn the situation around but the Translator will still face a rocky road

Ready When You Are, CD

CD formats are multiplying faster than cassette sizes. A fourth format, called CD-V (for video), is emerging for the prolific 4.75-inch optical disks. This is in addition to the audio-only CD format, the CD-ROM format for computer programs, and CD-I (for interac-

tive). The latter is an audio and video standard aimed squarely at consumers. It's so new, supporters don't expect to see CD-I products until next year.

Nevertheless, it's already spawned CD-V, which will have up to ten minutes of digital audio and color video, making the discs ideal for music videos and brief children's programs. Philips, Matsushita, Sony, and other CD firms are working out the final standards. CD-V players. when they arrive, will be able to play audio CDs, and CD-I players will play all the formats. It's a good thing, too. By then, we may be too confused to do anything but pop in the discs and hope for the best.

The UnVideo Generation

A new study of tube watchers by the Disney organization came up with the startling finding that 40 percent of America's TV households do not know it is possible to buy pre-recorded videotapes. Say it ain't so, Mickey.

The Reel Thing

You can't keep a good van down. The British video rental vans covered in this month's "Videogram" already have at least one U.S. counterpart-Donna Bodzo's Reels on Wheels in Atlanta, Georgia. Bodzo packs her Toyota van with more than 500 VHS titles, ranging from Rambo to Repo Man, and promises delivery within the hour. Best of all, she takes no deposits, and charges no membership or late fees.

RAPID Transit

A video coding system developed for pros is seducing home video makers with the promise of glitch-free edits and easy to use content indexes. The Single-Frame Retrieval and Access Program in Digital (RAPID) was developed by GSE Electronic Systems in Germany. According to inventor Peter Roggendorf. RAPID adds a digital time code to the control track VCRs use to svnchronize head drum rotation. The code holds all the info needed to locate quickly and precisely any point on a tape, turning an ordinary VCR into a video jukebox. Modified VCRs can play uncoded cassettes, and unmodified VCRs can play coded cassettes. It presently costs about \$200 to add the system to German VCRs, but Roggendorf claims a chip is being developed that will plummet the cost to a stunning \$1.50. If it works, could anyone resist?

Automatic Everything

The North American Philips Corporation (NAP) is closing in on the long-sought Holy Grail of remote control—a single infrared unit able to operate any piece of video equipment by any manufacturer. NAP's new hand-held Universal Remote operates at least 29 brands of VCR, 15 cable converter boxes, and NAP TVs. Its 33 buttons cover a multitude of functions, even flashing "goodnight" on the screen before automatically powering down the tube. Look for a full report on this wireless wonder next month.

Direct-View Behemoth

How big can you blow a bubble before it bursts? Mitsubishi, which pioneered the first 35-inch color TV tube, says its wizards can now build a 40-inch, 500-line resolution direct-view monitor/receiver. That's a cathode ray balloon the size of a small projection TV. It will be available this fall in Japan for a whopping \$9000 to \$12000. Schools, theaters, and public institutions are likely to be its chief customers but we suspect a few wealthy videophiles will also join the line.

On the Road

Fodor's Travel Guides. which cover the world in print, will do it on tape as well with travel videos about Mexico, Hawaii, and Great Britain. Thorn/ EMI/HBO Video will release the series this fall for \$29.95 each. "Travel literature in electronic form is the wave of the future," said Fodor publisher Richard Scott. Read "See The World for \$24.95" in this issue for a look at the future that's already here.

Built-In Bird Watchers

Coming to terms with the inevitably of scrambling, at least six satellite firms are planning to make home dish receivers that accept M/A-Com's VideoCipher II descrambler module. The companies with the builtin bird watchers are Chaparral, Birdview Satellite, Houston Tracker Systems, Standard Communications. Channel Master, and—of course— M/A-Com.

"SENSATIONAL. A film of dazzling inventiveness, stylish concepts and nail-biting suspense. You'll go away soaring. Don't miss it'.'

Rex Reed NY Post

"THE DANCING IS SPECTACULAR...You care so much for these guys...You can see the passion in their dancing and their plight as human beings."

Gene Siskel AT THE MOVIES

"ONE OF THE BEST MOVIES OF THE YEAR, Bonyshnikov is thoroughly superb,

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Dennis Cunningham WCBS-TV CBS-TV Morning News









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Feedback

Readers Air Their Views

The Empire Strikes Back

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I'm still laughing at "The President Reagan Show" (June 1986). It got me thinking about those memorable episodes with other occupants of the White House. Can we ever forget those early speeches of President Eisenhower when the teleprompter failed, or President Johnson showing us his incision or lifting that poor beagle by the ears? Or, of course, Nixon's resignation speech and, years before, his famous Checkers speech. Ronald Reagan could learn a few things from his predecessors. I wonder what George Bush is planning.

John W. Pettibone Rockport, Mass.

I admire and respect President Reagan as I have no other president. History will bear me out: He will be regarded as the greatest president this country ever had, and his successors will attempt to emulate him. Mean liberals such as you, fortunately, will not be able to change that. Your failure to fathom the President's nature reveals a lack of humor on your part. If I really wanted to collect "funny flicks," the Democrats provide a cast of real looney toons-Jesse Jackson, Walter Mondale, Geraldine Ferraro, Ed Koch, and Jimmy Carter. You have demeaned the intelligence of your readers. Richard Curtis Dunnell Elmhurst, N.Y.

I read "The President Reagan Show" expecting to gain new and interesting insight. Instead, the author's vivid bias instantly put me on the defensive. What really turned me off was that the "17 Things Reagan Has Done on His Show" are characteristic of goofs I myself might have made in the same situations. Perhaps the author didn't realize that his readers would identify with an imperfect Reagan as a real, human-being president.

W.T. Basore Tulsa, Okla.

"The President Reagan Show" broke the camel's back. The thinnest of pretexts was used to print an article which was condescending to the reader and mean-spirited to its subject. Cancel my subscription.

Craig McKinney Columbia, Md.

Blank Stares

I have to comment on your article "All the Blanks Fit to Tape" (June 1986). After explaining power measurement in terms of decibels, Lancelot Braithwaite states that "some of today's S/Ns are about 1/10 (10 dB better) what they were a decade ago." I'm not sure what he's trying to say. Assuming a signal to noise ratio of 100 ten years ago, Braithwaite says that today this has been reduced to 10. With an S/N of this order, I don't think you'd want to watch a picture. He then calls this a 10 dB improvement. Please explain.

Robert C. Wolthausen Clinton, N.Y.

On early VCRs video S/N (sometimes called luminance S/N) was about 38 decibels, meaning the noise was about 1/100 the amplitude of the video signal. Today's best VCRs have a video S/N of about 48 dB (10 dB better). In terms of power, the reduction in noise is 1/10. However, since power varies with the square of the voltage, in voltage terms the amplitude of the noise is now about 3/1000 the amplitude of the video signal.

I was disappointed by your blank tape update. In your original article ("The Official Video Magazine Blank Tape Tests," February, 1985) each tape was assigned values on a circular graph that made it easy to see the relative performance of each tape. The update contains only vague comments on relative quality, with no graphs. In addition, Maxell has an RX Pro tape that is clearly the top of its line, yet you do not mention it at all.

Jan R. Harrington New York, N.Y.

June's "All The Blanks Fit to Tape" was an interim update on the state of the tapes. We'll be back next February with a full-scale analysis of blank tape characteristics and performance, graphs and all.

Resolution Rock

In "The Camcorder Derby" (June 1986) you wisely showed the claimed resolution for both the camera and recorder portions of some of the candidates, while for others only one resolution figure was

shown. I understand that both figures might not have been available from each supplier, but a footnote to this effect would have helped. I've already heard from several people who claim, based on this article, that the Hitachi VM5000 records a 350-line picture, and that the Kyocera KD200 8mm yields a 330-line spectacular that exceeds even SuperBeta! I know you were making no such claims, but not showing a VCR maximum for all models was confusing.

James R. Holt Cincinnati, Ohio

End of the Road

RCA's announcement of the end of CED disc production ("Fast Forward," May 1986) didn't come as a surprise. However, I wonder how much of that 95 percent sales drop was its own doing. In trying to obtain discs through a couple of national mail order houses, my orders came back with over half the requested titles out of stock. Video dealers have told me about the extreme difficulty of getting new disc releases since the players were discontinued. The lesson for format planners is plain: do not introduce new products unless you plan to support them to the hilt. Mark Deszcz Williamsville, N.Y.

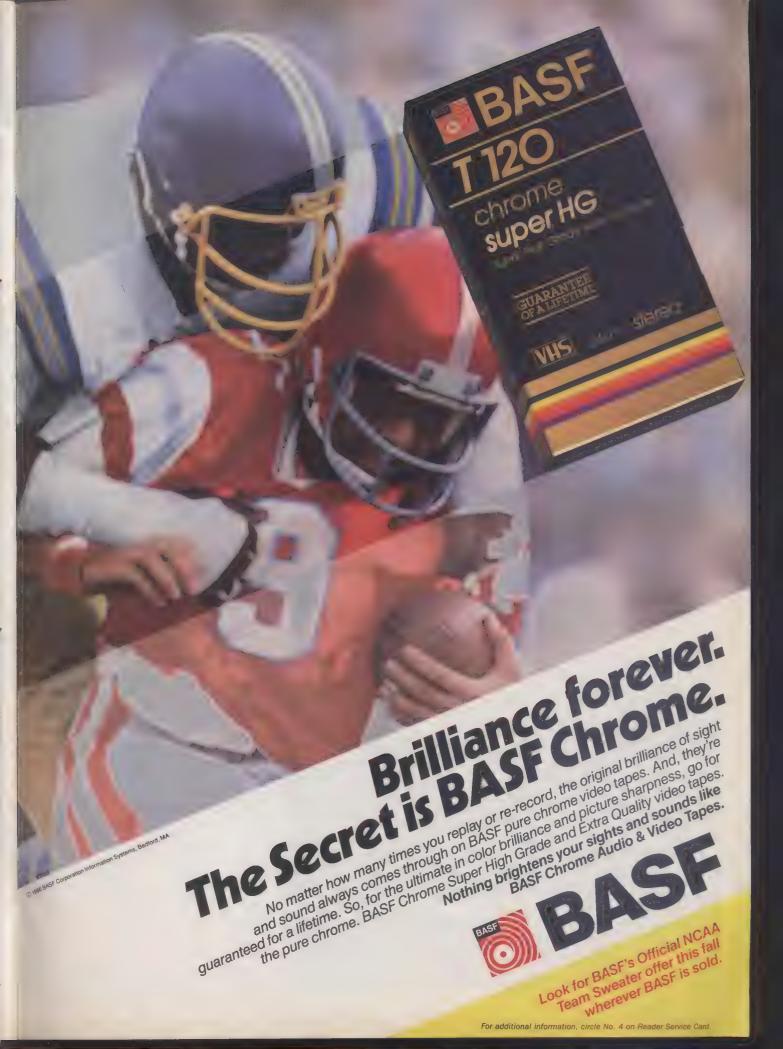
Eights and Aces

If the makers of 8mm left in extra bandwidth to improve picture quality, why hasn't it been used? If they wanted to introduce it with a bang they should have included the picture improvement. But no! They had to introduce 8mm with picture quality no better than VHS. I'm starting to think consumers are mostly to blame for not demanding quality.

Ty Chamberlain Albuquerque, N.M.

It's ironic that JVC is fighting the 8mm format on technical grounds when its victory over Beta was pure marketing gimmickry. I predict that by 1990 there will be only two formats, and VHS will not be one of them. There will be 8mm for general consumers and Beta for us videophiles who really understand and appreciate technical superiority.

Hisham A. Alireza Jeddah, Saudi Arabia



Feedback __

I own a Sony 8mm camcorder and a JVC VHS HQ VCR, and I'm happy with the performance of both. But VHS will remain the heart of my video system until 8mm tapes become reasonable in price. At the moment 120-minute 8mm tape costs twice as much as a premium quality 120-minute VHS tape. If tape makers don't lower their tape and component costs to competitive levels, 8mm will remain a novelty rather than a serious contender.

Craig D. Anderson Centerville, Mass.

Robots of Dawn

"Copyright Compromise" (April 1986) made a lot of sense. It is an idea we have been promoting for over two years. The problem is that, because humans currently handle rentals, the movie studios are at the mercy of the store management to provide accurate records for the rental royalty sharing. That's why we invented and are now manufacturing Video Vendor robotic rental vending machines. They automatically track all rentals and segregate movies due royalties from those that do not require royalties. It is virtually impossible to make errors and very difficult to cheat. We invite the studios to contact us to work out a program like you have suggested. Barry Shore

President, Video Vendor Skokie, III.

Precious Gem

In your May 1986 issue, Tom Soter writes some very nice things about *The Jewel in the Crown*. I would feel more delighted with his accolade if he had not stated that the program was "the gem in the BBC's collection." It was, in fact, made by Granada Television of England and distributed in the USA by Granada Video through Simon & Schuster. Contrary to popular belief, not everything good from British television is made by the BBC.

Patricia Feinberg Granada Television London

Addendum

The chart in June's "The Camcorder Derby" should have included Aiwa's CV-80 8mm autofocus camcorder with CCD pickup and an fl.4,6:1 power zoom lens operable at 19 lux. Weighing 5.1 pounds, it offers 300-line resolution, a one-inch viewfinder, two hours of recording time, and a one-hour rechargable battery. The suggested price is \$1795.

VIDEO welcomes your comments and questions. Please do not enclose self-addressed envelopes with letters as the volume of mail does not permit personal replies. All letters may be edited for clarity and space. Address correspondence to Feedback, VIDEO Magazine, 460 West 34th Street, New York, N.Y. 10001.

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Big Cast Big Laughs Big Thouble



VHS Beta

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THE BIG SLEEP

BLADE RUNNER

THE ALAMO

48 HOURS

BLUE THUNDER FRENCH CONNECTION

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ARSENIC AND OLD LACE

FANNY AND ALEXANDER



WITNESS 4114052

THE COTTON CLUB

BODY DOUBLE

LA CAGE AUX FOLLES

BREAKING AWAY

BREATHLESS

BUS STOP

CAPTAIN BLOOD

THE LAST DETAIL

CAT BALLOU

CHOOSE ME

THE DEAD ZONI

AMERICAN GIGOLO

THE BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI

CARNAL KNOWLEDGE

THE FALCON & THE SNOWMAN

THE BROTHER FROM ANOTHER PLANET

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	EASY RIDER	1530072
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	EDUCATING RITA	1593012
	DEATH WISH	2027132
	EL CID	7015082
	THE ELEPHANT MAN	2047012
	EYEWITNESS	0778182
	THE BOSTONIANS	7139092
	FALLING IN LOVE	2048002
)N	ERASERHEAD	1538082
	THE BLACK STALLION	0504012
	AJRPLANE	2033152
2	FISTS OF FURY	0535122
> 1	THE MAN WHO SHOT LIBERTY VALANCE	2092052

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TITLE SEE TOURS	SELECTION NUMBER
CHRISTINE	1580062
THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN	0534212
CITIZEN KANE	5501032
CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND	1510192

THE FLAMINGO KID

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ON GOLDEN POND	0523162	THE TEN COMMANDMENTS	2026062
SOME LIKE IT HOT	0584122	THREE DAYS OF THE CONDOR	2043052
SOPHIE'S CHOICE	0754082	THE TIME BANDITS	2010042
SHE WORE A YELLOW RIBBON	5504002	POPEYE	2038022
FLASHDANCE	2018142	THE PINK PANTHER	0561012
MARY POPPINS	5276062	MY FAIR LADY	3507022
THE POSTMAN ALWAYS RINGS		M*A*S*H	0055122
TWICE	4000282	THE PURPLE ROSE OF CAIRO	7136022
NASHVILLE	2080092	REDS	2029032
THE POSEIDEN ADVENTURE	0570262	NEVER CRY WOLF	5305012
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REVENGE OF THE NERDS	0925022	i
MODERN TIMES	0590062	i
MOMMIE DEAREST	2000142	
MOONRAKER	0677102	
MR. MOM	7104002	
STAGE DOOR	3284192	
TAXI DRIVER	1560002	
CHILDREN OF THE CORN	3105082	
THE SOUND OF MUSIC	0039212	
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THE NATURAL	1649052	
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SUNSET BLVD.	2003032	
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New Products



GE Streamlines Control Central

Control Central 3 isn't the third generation of General Electric's unified remote control. It's the scaled down, cheaper model that combines the functions of three remotes into one. This second version of the programmable wireless remote learns the infrared codes of video or audio components just like its older brother. Control Central 3 lacks the LCD screen, a fourth code capability, and the optional functions (like bass and treble control) of the original model, but it is \$50 cheaper.

Price: \$99.95.

For additional information, circle No. 147 on Reader Service Card.

Sony Builds Movie Theater Into VCR

Sony's new SuperBeta Movie Theater VCR combines a powerful 20-watt-per-channel stereo amplifier with Beta Hi-Fi, MTS stereo decoding, and an option for surround sound. The SL-HFT7 has 148-channel cable-compatible tuning and a 7-day/6-event timer. Among other

standard SuperBeta features, it includes the Synchro Edit switch to minimize signal loss during editing and the nearly noise-free BetaScan picture search. The infrared remote lets you select the various audio options.

Price: \$699.

For additional information, circle No. 148 on Reader Service Card.

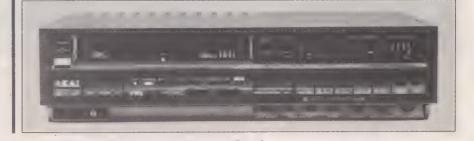


W&S Makes Cable Television VCR-Ready

W&S, a manufacturer of cable TV converter boxes, simplifies the link between decoders and VCRs with the Video Control Module. The VCM 2001 sits next to the converter so you don't have to reach behind the TV to an A/B switch while recording a program. The box lets you watch and record one scrambled and one non-scrambled cable program. However, you will still need an extra converter box to watch and record two scrambled channels. Clear buttons and LED displays lead you through the options. W&S also offers the VCM 2002-identical to the VCM 2001 except for an additional input to hookup a personal computer. Price: \$90 to \$95.

For additional information, circle No. 146 on Reader Service Card.





Stereo VCR: The Amp's Built-In

You won't need an external amplifier to drive stereo speakers when using two new Akai VHS VCRs. The two head VS-525U and four-head VS-565U with Hi-Fi and MTS stereo decoding integrate ten-watt-per-channel amplifiers to save space in your video setup. Both VCRs feature HQ recording circuitry for sharper pictures. The 107-channel cable-compatible tuners have an impressive 32 station presets. The timer records six programs over a 2-week period. The infrared remote controls several functions, including volume, slow motion, frame advance, and visual search.

Price: VS-565U, \$880; VS-525U,

For additional information, circle No. 149 on Reader Service Card.

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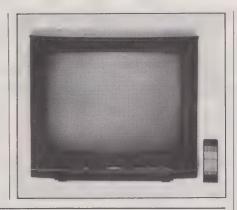
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For additional information, circle No. 7 on Reader Service Card

Pioneer Cleans Up Picture In Stereo TV

Pioneer says its new SD-2601 stereo monitor/receiver has an 18 percent better color picture than previous models. A comb filter and new circuits that cancel noise and improve contrast deliver a manufacturer-rated horizontal resolution of 560 lines. The 26-inch set has a squared tube for a larger, less distorted picture.

The MTS stereo decoder also offers a Second Audio Program (SAP). The cable-compatible tuner receives up to



139 channels. Two built-in speakers are powered by a 5-watt-per-channel amplifier. A variable audio output jack allows for the connection of external speakers. Three sets of video/stereo audio inputs and two sets of outputs link various video and audio components. The integrated infrared remotes also control the basic functions of Pioneer's LaserVision videodisc players and VCRs. Price: \$1200.

For additional information, circle No. 150 on Reader Service Card.

Toshiba Debuts HQ Pro VHS VCR

By extending the VHS VCR High Quality (HQ) technology, Toshiba has launched HQ Pro. In addition to the improved sharpness, enhanced details and video noise reduction of standard HQ, Toshiba has added an edit switch that cuts off the enhancer when dubbing. The front-loading, 4-head M-4500 features MTS stereo decoding and Dolby noise reduction. The 117-channel cable-compatible tuner has a 4-event/7-day timer. Picture search includes two speeds, 5X and 15X.

Price: \$879.95.

For additional information, circle No. 151 on Reader Service Card.



Minolta VCRs Stress Easy Operation

Ease of operation is the key ingredient in Minolta's three new VHS VCRs. Many of the functions are automatic including power on, rewind, and shut-off. All the tuners have the convenience of random access channel selection. Cable-compatible tuners, 4-event/2-week timers, infrared remote controls, and one button record are among the features in the new line. The decks also use High Quality recording circuitry for a sharper picture.

At the bottom of the line is the MV-202—a basic two-head VCR that has a 107-channel cable-compatible tuner with an 80-channel memory. Stepping up is the three-head MV-40S MTS stereo VCR with a 119-channel tuner. At the top is the MV-60S. It is identical to the MV-40S but adds two audio heads for Hi-Fi sound.

Price: n.a.

For additional information, circle No. 152 on Reader Service Card.

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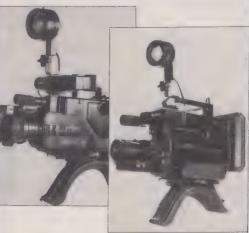
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New Products ——



Sony Stylizes **Projection TV**

Sony has combined its high tech XBR styling and a rear projection TV with the introduction of the KPR-36XBR. The 36-inch screen uses green phosphors to claim a brightness rating of 300 footlamberts and 450 lines of horizontal resolution. The charcoal grey set has a 181-channel cable-compatible tuner with built-in antenna/cable switching via the infrared remote. The MTS stereo decoder also receives SAP and FM simulcasts. Dual two-way speakers can be removed from the set for optimum placement. The set accepts input from up to three video components.

Price: \$2800.

For additional information, circle No. 153 on Reader Service Card.



Yamaha Video Speakers Seek Digital Heights

The digital audio found on newer video equipment, such as 8mm VCRs and some laser-optical disc players, demands better speakers, and Yamaha has it. Its shielded NS-100X speakers capture the higher frequency response and dynamic range that digital audio sources deliver. Each speaker's 9-inch woofer, 2.4-inch dome midrange and 1.2-inch tweeter use carbon filter cones for clearer, more powerful sound. Each speaker isolates magnetic currents with second magnet to prevent interference with video signals.

Price: \$249 each.

For additional information, circle No. 154 on Reader Service Card.



Radio Shack Makes Your Video System More Versatile

Operate your remote-control satellite receiver, VCR or cable box from any room in your home

Our Archer® Remote Control Extender relays the commands from any infrared remote control. Here's an example: Your remote-control satellite receiver, VCR or other program source is in the living room. It's connected to a TV in the bedroom. With the Extender, you don't have to go from bedroom to living room to change channels or select VCR modes! This step-saver is available ONLY at Radio Shack and it's only \$49.95

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The Archer Multiple Video Distribution System sends programs from your main components to any number of remote TVs. For example, someone can watch a video tape in the bedroom, another person can watch satellite TV in the den, while you enjoy baseball on the living room TV. What's more, you don't have to flip switches or change cables! Simply choose the desired program source with each TV's channel selector. Only \$49.95

You can use them separately or together

Both of these high-tech accessories easily connect with your components. Ask for a demonstration today and discover how you can add super versatility and real convenience to your video system.

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For additional information, circle No. 10 on Reader Service Card.



RCA Adds 7-Head Stereo VCR

RCA is offering a new 7-head stereo VHS VCR. The VMT670HF has MTS stereo with Second Audio Program (SAP) for foreign language broadcasts.

Two Hi-Fi audio heads deliver a dynamic range of more than 80 dB and the five video heads allow nearly jitter-free scanning, slow-motion, frame advance, and pause at both SP and SLP speeds. The VHS High Quality (HQ) circuitry delivers sharper outlines, brightness, noise reduction, and detail enhancement.

The 169-channel cable-compatible tuner can lock onto and remember up to 99 unscrambled signals. Easy-to-understand onscreen instructions lead users through the timer settings for 8 events over a year. Tracking control, timer recording, and counter reset are among the many functions that can be controlled by the infrared wireless remote.

Price: varies from \$899 to \$929.

For additional information, circle No. 155 on Reader Service Card.



Quasar Adds HQ to Camcorders

Quasar, a marketing arm of Matsushita, is delaying a decision on selling either 8mm or Compact VHS camcorders. However, its two new full-size VHS camcorders use High Quality circuitry to record sharper pictures. The VM-11 and VM-20 both have a manufacturer-rated light sensitivity of 7 lux with a horizontal resolution of 300 lines. The VM-11 has a half-inch high band Newvicon tube and would seem to be the better performer in low light. Its f1.2 lens has a 6:1 power zoom ratio. The VM-20 uses a CCD pickup and has an f1.2 lens with an 8:1 zoom ratio. The camcorders come with a two-hour battery and an AC adaptor.

Price: VM-11, \$1769; VM-20, \$1969.

For additional information, circle No. 156 on Reader Service Card.

JVC Switches **And Enhances Video**

The JVC JX-E5 Video Selector/ Enhancer doubles as a switcher and a video signal amplifier for an A/V component system. Aimed primarily at dubbers and editors of video, this consumer machine accepts three video sources and sends signals to four components, including the monitor. If you have an older TV, the JX-E5 has a convenient RF modulator with antenna in/out terminals.

As an enhancer, the box boosts the video signal to deliver higher frequencies to the picture. Since enhancers also boost noise, JVC's Video Noise Suppressor cuts down on snow. A split screen control lets you compare normal and enhanced pictures for optimum sharpness. The enhancer can also be switched off.

Price: \$250.

For additional information, circle No. 157 on Reader Service Card.

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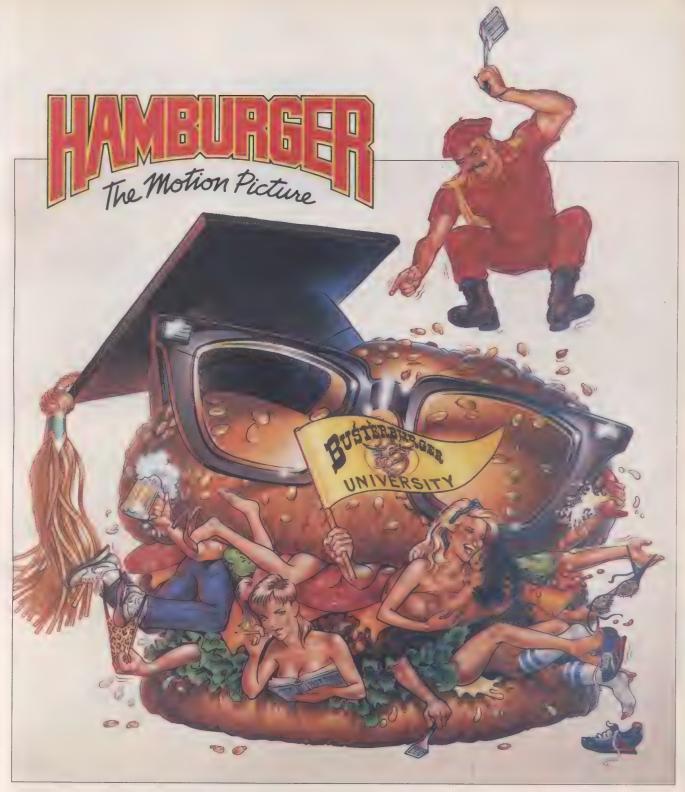
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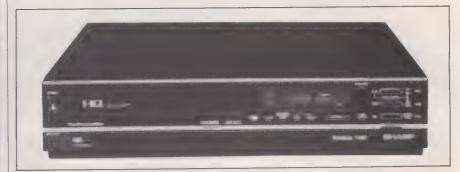
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Sharp's Program Card Detaches From VCR

There's no need to stand when programming Sharp's VC-T64U VHS HQ VCR. A detachable program card lets you select up to five events over two weeks. After looking over the TV listings from the convenience of your easy chair, slip the battery-powered card back into the VCR. The VC-T64U features High Quality circuitry for a sharper picture than non-HQ VHS VCRs. A 110-channel cable-compatible voltage synthesized tuner remembers 16 channels. Other features include auto play, auto repeat, and a 13-function wireless remote.

Price: n.a.

For additional information, circle No. 158 on Reader Service Card.

Technics A/V Processor Surrounds You With Sound

Technics' versatile SH-AV44 processor creates both Dolby-encoded surround sound and a simulated surround effect. The unit accepts four audio/video sources and has background video selector to play any audio along with a pic-

ture. The simulated surround effect, usable with stereo and mono signals, selectively shifts the lower reverberant notes between the main and surround speakers. Controls on the SH-AV44 include a bass boost switch, rear and master volume controls, and sliders with LED indicators for Dolby Surround effects.

Price: \$320.

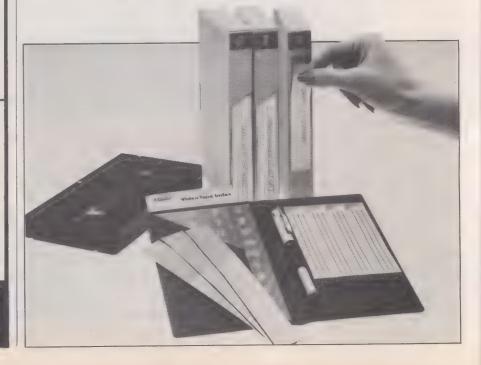
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Label It Again With TitleTabs

TitleTabs, from Sima Products, makes it easier to organize and identify your video collection. These aren't just peel off and stick 'em tabs. Adhesive title holders stick to the spines of cassette boxes, and disposable paper tabs slip into clear plastic pockets. The TitleTab Starter Kit contains a wallet with 20 tab pockets, 80 tabs, 2 sets of numbers, an index pamphlet, and a pen.

Price: \$9.95.

For additional information, circle No. 160 on Reader Service Card.



Sian Here



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You'll receive each film packaged in its own handsome collector's case, accompanied by a detailed Program Guide with complete credits, an indepth review by a nationally known critic, rare studio photos, and fascinating behindthe-camera insights-like the

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Fine Tuning

Your Video Questions Answered

Feel the Noise

Q I'm puzzled about the video noise reduction switch on the back of the Zenith VR-4100. Are you supposed to notice a change in the picture when you turn the switch on and off? I can't see any difference. I've also switched it on and off when recording and then played it back, but still can't see any difference.

Curt Newell Mason City, Iowa

A The switch is also on JVC's HR-D566 (Zenith's VR-4100 is made by JVC). The manual for the 566 explains that, for normal use, the switch should be left on, which is where it's set when the machine is shipped. But it recommends that you turn it off when making multi-generation dupes using the machine as the playback VCR.

The switch serves much the same purpose as the socalled edit switch on many newer SuperBeta VCRs and 8mm decks. When the misnamed edit switch (which should be called a dub or copy switch to describe its function better) is turned on, circuitry inside the VCR normally used to equalize the signal for optimum playback on a TV set is turned off. When left on, these circuits actually degrade, rather than enhance, the quality of a tape being copied or edited.

Switching between the on and off positions will reveal a subtle onscreen effect, depending on whether you're watching the picture via an RF feed or through direct video. But you won't see it in an E-to-E mode, nor on any recordings made on the machine while you're switching the control. You'll only notice it when watching a tape being

played back on your Zenith. You can also see the effect when viewing the playback of a tape that was copied on another VCR from a source tape that was played on your Zenith.

Betamovie Plus?

Q I've enjoyed the articles VIDEO has printed about Sony's Betamovie camcorder. I'm curious to know, however, if Sony intends to add an electronic viewfinder (EVF) and flying erase heads to the Betamovie.

R. Patton Warren, Mich.

A Sony's current model, the BMC-660K, is the fourth generation Betamovie. It offers SuperBeta recording quality, but it doesn't have an EVF. Sony makes an industrial version of Betamovie, the GCS-1, which does have an EVF. But this viewfinder only lets you electronically preview the scene as it's being composed or shot. You still can't play back tapes into the viewfinder.

Flying erase heads would definitely enhance the cleancut editing of Betamovie, or any other camcorder for that matter. All of Sony's 8mm camcorders and table-model 8mm VCRs have a flying erase head (note the singular), which erases two fields of video with every pass across the tape when it's in record. In fact, the flying erase head is the only way in which Sony's 8mm machines erase old audio and video. They don't use a conventional full-erase head at all, although some other 8mm products do.

Sony also has an industrial Beta VCR, the GCS-50, with flying erase heads (plural), which erases video on a more precise field-by-field basis. Since most video productions really come into their own when they're edited (instead of being edited "in the camera"), it's more logical to put the flying erase heads in the editor, rather than the camcorder.

Making Connections

Q You state that picture quality improves when you use direct connections from a VCR to a TV or a monitor, bypassing the RF modulators. Is it possible to go from the video output on a VCR to the RF input of a TV that doesn't have video input jacks? I have a Sony KV-1923, which only has regular RF inputs. If I can do this, where can I get the jacks I would need?

Daniel Ponellin Aidan, Penn.

A While there are connectors that will let you convert an RCA-type plug to a threaded F-type connector, you're wasting your time if you think that plugging a video output into an RF input will accomplish what you want. Overcoming the connector mismatch isn't the problem. It's the electronic mismatch you have to cope with.

The RF input (VHF or UHF) on your Sony TV goes into the set's tuner, and that single cable carries both audio and video signals. Direct audio and video signals tap into a TV differently. Some sets can be retrofitted for this capability. Others can't. I'd take the set to a qualified TV technician and see if he can do the job for you. It's not something for the unskilled to tinker with, since

TV sets use high voltages that can be dangerous if you don't know how to handle them.

London Calling

A friend of mine, who travels frequently to London, is annoyed by the availability there of videocassette programs that can't be bought in the U.S. They're all recorded in the PAL format, which is useless here. We thought we would buy a very cheap British VCR, then plug the video out jacks into an American VCR. Will this work? Also, will plugging the British VCR into an American wall socket through a voltage convertor cause any problems?

James M. Curran Cedar Grove, N.J.

A Getting that British VCR to run off of U.S. current shouldn't present a problem, provided you buy an appropriate transformer to make our 110 volt/60 cycle current feed that 220 volt/50 cycle VCR.

But I would buy a cheap PAL TV to go with the VCR, since simply interconnecting the video cables as you suggest won't let you copy PAL format tapes to our NTSC standard. There are VCRs available here, though, that will play back PAL tapes on a regular NTSC TV. For more information, and prices, contact Instant Replay, 2951 S. Bayshore Drive, Miami, Fla. 33133.

VIDEO welcomes your questions. Please do not enclose self-addressed envelopes with letters as the volume of mail does not permit personal replies. Questions may be edited for clarity and space. Address correspondence to Fine Tuning, VIDEO Magazine, 460 West 34th Street, New York, N.Y. 10001.



Eileen Brennan as Mrs. Peacock



Tim Curry as The Butle



Madeline Kahn as Mrs. White



Christopher Lloyd as Professor Plum



Michael McKean as Mr. Green



Martin Mull as Colonel Mustard



Lesley Ann Warren as Miss Scarlett

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Clue

THE

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CLUE, the videocassette. Get away with one, and find out who's getting away with murder.

VHS hi-fi Paramount Pictures Passed A Guber-Peters Production Polygram Pictures And Debra Hill Productions
Clue Fileen Brennan Tim Curry Madeline Kahn Christopher Lloyd Michael McKean Martin Múll
Lesley Ann Warren Music B John Morris Gregor Of Photogram Victor | Kemper A S.C.

seuture Brodusque Jon Peters. Reter Guber - John Landis. George Folsey, II. Base upor in Parket Brothers Bonn Came reenpiev ev Jonathan Lynn - story sv. John Landis and Jonathan Lynn - Brodusen ev Debra Hill - urceted ev Jonathan Lyn





<u>Videogram</u>

The Electronic Intelligencer

Edited by Ben Templin

Movie Deals On Wheels

A generation ago, it was the ice cream man who was the hottest thing to cruise the streets. But now in London, the newest rage is mobile video libraries—fleets of cars filled with hundreds of videocassettes that make quick, cheap home deliveries.

Of the several that serve London's suburbs, the most successful is Barnet Mobile Video Library of Enfield, London. Five Ford Fiestas take to the mews and lanes every day of the week jampacked with 150 titles chosen from a central pool of more than 2000 tapes.

The system isn't quite as simple as the friendly Good Humor man jingling a bell to attract a crowd. First-time Mobile Video customers have to call up the



company to "book" a film. If customers have used the service before, they can expect a weekly knock on the door from a Mobile Video Library salesman. Seven days later, the salesman returns to collect the tape and rent customers a new batch of programs.

Barnet's prices are reasonable. There's no membership

fee, delivery charge, or even a deposit required. What's more surprising is that the cars bop around the London suburbs without any logos plastered on them. Company officials are fearful such advertising will draw blokes who would try to steal that most precious of commodities—a car full of video hits.

—Rochelle Bass

Underground Railroad

If your taste in rock music runs less to Prince and Madonna and more towards Einsturzende Neubauten and Cabaret Voltaire, take heart: home video relief is on the way from several quarters.

Relativity, a division of a large New York-based record importer and distributor, is releasing U.K.-produced, NTSC-format VHS cassettes of offbeat British bands whose cult followings here have not endeared them to the likes of Sony or MusicVision. So far, Relativity has brought over two by Bauhaus and one each by Crass and the Cult. Mostly available through cooler record stores, they retail for under \$40. (Relativity, 149-03 Guy Brewer Blvd., Jamaica, N.Y. 11434.)

Out in San Francisco, Target Video is assisting numerous underground rockers to enter the home video age as both a releasing company and a distributor. Its catalog offers such new wave stars as the Cramps, Black Flag, Throbbing Gristle, and Toxic Reasons. Several compilation tapes of hardcore punk bands are also available. Tapes are reasonably priced and available in Beta and VHS by mail order. (678 South Van Ness, San Francisco, Calif. 94110.)

The Midwest also gets in the act via Fresh Sounds (Box 36, Lawrence, Kans. 66044), an independent record company that has moved into video. The photocopied catalog offers such delectables as Psychic TV and S.P.K. tapes for aficionados of real rock weirdness. Stop making sense, indeed!

—Ira Robbins

Reach Out And Snap Someone

At the 1964 New York World's Fair, AT&T predicted its Picturephone would be in every home by 1980. Now, six years late and from another company, comes Luma—a video phone that delivers grainy black & white still pictures. Luma mates a three-inch screen and a half-inch camera with a gray desktop phone. It lacks moving pictures because it uses existing phone lines.

By European standards, it may be *passe*. The French coastal town of Biarritz has a video phone system that delivers moving color pictures. The system uses an expensive, thin fiber-optic wire that can carry 10 times as much 30 Video August 1986



information as a coaxial cable. Videos can be rented over the phone and displayed on the monitor. Biarritz' "televideo" club charges about \$4 a film plus \$1 in phone time for a 90-minute movie.

This "futuristic" technology carries a heavy price tag. The French experiment costs the government \$3000 a phone and \$7000 to wire a house with the fiber-optic cable. Luma goes for \$1450 and is intended for businesses, though "a home version is not very far off," says Luma marketing chief Roy Elkins. Luma will appear as a prop on *Miami Vice*.

Will the states see an American version of the French system sometime soon? "Turn of the century, if then," predicts Luma president Stan Zawadowicz.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY SUSAN FAIOLA

Introducing The One Remote That Does The Work Of Four.



The Control Central Remote.

Things are getting out of control. Separate remotes for your TV, VCR, stereo, CD or cable converter can be more control than you can handle.

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To program Control Central, just flick the switch to "learn," place it head-to-head with the

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In minutes, Control Central can memorize the operating codes of up to four separate infrared remotes. It's that simple.

And it reprograms just as easily for new or added equipment.

You can get the convenience of this one remote for yourself, or give one as a gift.

Control Central. The one remote that keeps everything under control.

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TV Den

Techniques and Technology

Taping in the Cable Jungle

by Roderick Woodcock

One of the most frustrating aspects of owning a VCR, even one that is "cable-capable," is connecting it to a cable TV system. Today's more sophisticated videophiles are as perplexed as ever by the jungle of options cable implies. And un-

derstandably, because there's no easy way to make a VCR that interfaces easily with all the types of cable systems now doing business. That's why it's important to understand how VCRs and cable can best get along.

Cable systems vary widely. Some are shoebox operations located in the boonies that get by with equipment most politely described as primitive. Systems in urban areas are much more sophisticated, and should be, considering what they charge.

Living in Los Angeles, I subscribe to two cable companies, Group W and Communicom. There are many others that service the farflung regions of densely populated southern California.

But Group W and Communicom are representative examples of the different ways in which cable TV signals reach subscribers.

Group W is the simplest type of cable system. It uses a cable carrying a TV signal into a residence for direct connection to ■ TV. The idea behind cable TV is to offer wider choice of programs than what's available from over-the-air commercial stations. Higher frequencies are used for the added channels. Since many older TVs can't receive these signals, the cable company provides a converter box that lets you select the channel you want. The box then broadcasts it on a low radio frequency (RF) your TV can receive. The converter box broadcasts the signal on either channel 3 or 4, whichever is unused in your area, just like the RF modulator of a VCR.

Don't confuse a converter box with a descrambler, even though the cable industry itself sometimes uses the words interchangeably. A converter is merely a way to access the specialized, higher frequency signals that can't be received by a regular TV. But so-called cable-ready or cable-compatible TVs and VCRs can receive these channels. If you own one, it can replace the cable companies' own converters, some of which don't have remote control capability. This can give you more control over your programming choices. Cable-ready VCRs make life even more convenient because you can program the VCR to receive and record virtually anything you want, and still watch something else at the same time.

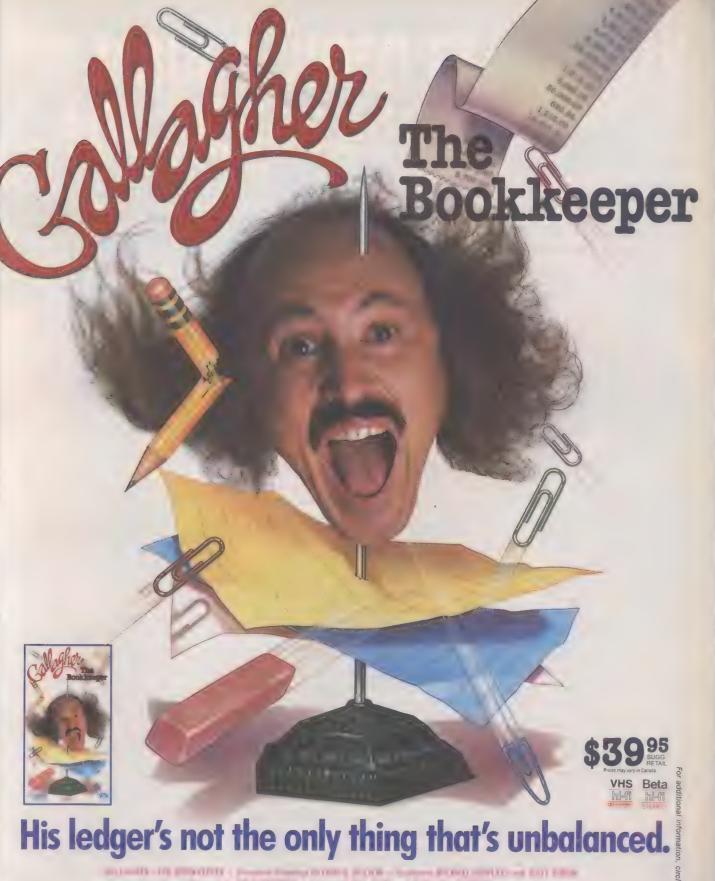
Even if you don't own a

cable-ready TV or VCR, there's a way to receive all the cable companies' frequencies without using "their" converter. You need a gadget called an "up converter," which is sometimes called a "block converter." This relatively inexpensive device, sold at Radio Shack and thousands of other electronics stores, converts the cable companies' frequencies to UHF frequencies (which cable companies generally don't use) that can be received on any TV with a UHF tuner.

A more expensive accessory, but still cheaper than a new TV, will turn any set into a remotely-controlled one, and let you access the full roster of unscrambled cable frequencies as well. These converter boxes are just like those rented to customers by some cable services. They are not illegal and are widely available from electronics outlets.

How do cable companies using this apparently simple system sell their extracost "premium" channels? What's to stop a subscriber from seeing them without paying? The answer is twofold. In some systems, all the programs are pumped into the line from the head end. Any a customer doesn't want are subtracted from the feed by special filters or "traps" on the line feeding his house. The traps scramble the signal for just that service, rendering it unviewable.

A second approach does the reverse. The premium channel is scrambled at the start and goes into the line that way. If a subscriber signs up to view the service, the cable company installs a descrambling device on the subscriber's incoming line.



Gallagher, the king of prop comedy, is back in his fifth big videocassette concert. And this time in addition to destroying his traditional watermelons, he takes dead aim at the Internal Revenue Service, banks, and a few other institutions we'd all like to hit with a sledge-hammer. There's an incredible assortment of Gallagher props including an imaginary elephant

splat-tacular Sledge-O-Matic finale. Head over To your favorite video store today and get Gallagher, The Bookkeeper. And while you're there, check out the other four Gallagher comedy concerts — The Maddest, Melon Crazy, Stuck In The Sixties and Over Your Head.

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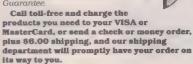
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TV Den.

This brings us to the more sophisticated cable systems that use gadgets called "addressable decoders" (a.k.a. descramblers) for stricter control over the distribution of their programs. In this system, all the services provided by the cable company are fed down the line into the subscriber's home. But no traps or filters are needed to sift out unwanted services. The box itself does that job. Addressable means it responds to commands from the cable company to scramble or unscramble any signal it chooses. If you want to add or subtract a service, all it takes is a phone call to the cable company. In short order, it will program its computer to unscramble the services received through your box.

For years, the usual practice was to offer two levels of programs, consisting of a one-price menu of "basic" channels augmented by costlier premium services. The premium services would be scrambled, and you would need the descrambler box to see them. Like the simpler converter box, the de-scrambler decoded the scrambled picture and broadcast it as a channel 3 or 4 RF output you could view on your TV or record with your VCR.

However, the box wasn't needed for the unscrambled basic channels and, with a little adroit wiring, you could divide the incoming cable feed between the descrambler and any number of cable-ready TV sets and VCRs. These could then receive the basic channels clearly, but would get a scrambled picture if you tuned them to a premium channel.

Lots of folks were happy to have just the basic services. They didn't want to pay the monthly rental on the cable box since their new TV or VCR could pick them up anyway. After I told a friend how easily he could bypass the cable box and wire the cable directly into his new NEC VCR, he tried to return the cable box for his deposit. The cable company told him, in effect, "No box, no cable service!" If he wanted to subscribe to that system, he had to rent their box, even if it was of no more use than a paperweight. But now that more cable companies are scrambling both basic and premium channels, it's clear their boxes are going to be used after all.

And that's the real problem for cable subscribers. Despite campaigns indicating that pay services are becoming "VCR friendly" (The Movie Channel even announced a "VCR Theater" consisting of movies aired in the middle of the night which it expects cable subscribers to videotape), the technical obstacles to making VCR ownership compatible with cable are becoming harder—not easier.

An addressable decoder box, which only lets one program at a time through

its cryptic innards, makes a mockery of the term "cable ready," whether applied to a TV or a VCR. Since you can only receive one unscrambled channel at a time, your VCR need never move from its channel 3 or 4 setting. Moreover if everything on cable is scrambled, you won't be able to "watch one, tape another" the way you can with unscrambled programming. The only solution to this conundrum is to rent an extra descrambler, so that one can be used for recording and the other for simultaneous viewing. Or, if you like, you can program a second VCR to record the signal picked up by the second box.

Thus far, the design of addressable decoders has been focused more on protecting signals than making them compatible with VCRs. Fortunately, that's changing. Zenith is one of the nation's largest makers of cable TV decoders. Last year, it introduced the Zenith VCR Interface, a system that works with all VCRs and all cable converter systems, and is easily installed by subscribers.

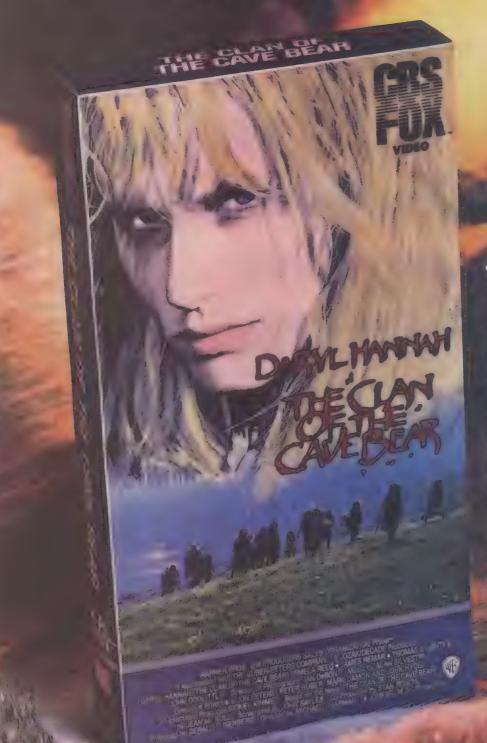
Another solution from Zenith is the TAC-Timer, a remote control transmitter that can program Zenith's Z-TAC cable decoder to change channels automatically and match the programmability of a VCR. According to Zenith, it's compatible with the more than 2 million Z-TAC decoders now in use. But if your cable company doesn't use Z-TAC decoders, you're out of luck.

Or are you? JNEL is still another company offering a solution to the one-way street cable subscribers with VCRs are on. Its Cablemaster is a \$140 device that sends infrared commands to an addressable decoder, instructing it to change channels on cue—and in sync with a VCR programmed to record at the same time. The VCR's input channel doesn't change, but the Cablemaster changes the channel coming out of the decoder, providing cable viewers with more timeshifting flexibility than they can now receive using just the cable box.

JNEL (792 So. Main Street, Mansfield, Mass. 02048) also offers a series of "personality modules" enabling one Cablemaster to work with a variety of different decoder boxes in use around the country.

For years, cable companies have done their darnedest to frustrate the usefulness of the VCR, which they regard as a competitive enemy, an alternate means of bringing programming into the home. Now that some of the major pay services are beginning to sing a different tune and want to court VCR-owning cable subscribers, perhaps we will see better hardware, with cable companies using decoders, descramblers, or what have you, that work with VCRs, rather than against them.

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Because now "The Clan of the Cave Bear" is on videocassette. And it stars Daryl Hannah

It's a moving story about a child, Ayla, who is adopted by a Neanderthal clan. And grows up to confront the clan's male leadership. At a time when it was forbidden for a woman to do so.

So if you've read the book, or even if you haven't, get the video. Because now, instead of pages, you can enjoy the story on the screen.



The Third Format

A Report on 8mm Technology

Mini Video Potpourri

by Roderick Woodcock

In recent columns, I've zoomed in on specific pieces of 8mm gear. This month is a good time to step back and report on a number of design and operating nuances that may have escaped readers' notice, and that may be puzzling those who have noticed.

First, videotape. I've bought and used tape under the Sony, TDK, Kyocera, Aiwa, Maxell, Canon, and Kodak brand names. I haven't seen any for sale yet in my area from 3M. Memorex, and Polaroid, though they have all announced product. Sony makes its own tape, and supplies Kyocera, Aiwa, and Sanyo. TDK makes its own, and is supplying Kodak and Canon. All their tape is of the metal particle variety, indicated by the MP designation on the wrapper.

No metal evaporated tape is available yet, but it's promised for early next year.

Qualitatively the brands seem much the same. The cassette shells used by each supplier are another matter. TDK's cassette, for example, is flawed by two small design quirks. Quirk number one is the tiny red lever you have to push to disable the record function on a cassette. A fingernail won't do. You need a small screwdriver or the tip of a narrow ballpoint pen to move it. Most other brands use a larger red lever that's easier to move. It's a better design.

Quirk number two is the small tape window on the cassette and the way in which the two reel hubs are obscured by closely spaced concentric semi-circles. They make it difficult, if not impossible, to see if the tape is actually moving once the cas-

sette is in a machine. You can't see the hubs rotating.

The open hub design found on many other brands, which also have larger viewing windows, is more functional. Sony's tape has a larger window on the right side of the cassette under the take-up reel, making it easier to see how much tape has accumulated, and whether it's packing smoothly. Though all 8mm camcorders and VCRs have status lights to indicate whether the tape is moving, my experiences have taught me not to trust the lights alone. Even if I did, I would still have to look through the cassette window to see how much tape I had left.

Kodak, TDK, and Canon supply their tapes in dustfree, hinged plastic cases, with cardboard slip cases, just like Beta and VHS cassettes. Other brands come with just the plastic case, and ship the tape in a plastic wrapper that's discarded after you open it. The extra slip case is a plus, especially for labelling your library of mini-cassettes, but most are ending up at the back of the cassette shelf. The plastic cases afford more than enough protection for the

Have you noticed that the hubs in the center of the take-up and supply reels remain the same size, regardless of the length of the 8mm cassette? This is a manufacturing efficiency used by the new format. Most half-inch tapes use larger hubs for their shorter lengths, packing the tape near the outer edge of the reels. This is done for esthetic purposes, and to keep a cassette from looking

almost empty. Many half-inch tape duplicators frequently use a standard reel for customized short loads, without encountering any problems with tape loading or VCR threading.

Many of the new 8mm camcorders and VCRs use a U-loading system. The tape threads up around the drum and stays that way during the stop, play, and tape shuttle modes. On the Kodak MVS system, the tape unthreads back into the cassette when you turn off the power. This destroys the continuity of a taping cycle, and forces you to recue the tape the next time you want to tape something

I'm sorry to report that Sony's EV-S700 8mm deck, its top-of-the-line model, replete with digital audio capability, also has this lamentable unthreading cycle. And it's even more inconvenient than on the Kodak. At least with the Kodak, if you have a tape locked in the machine (but unthreaded) and want to remove it quickly, before it starts to thread, all you need do is press the power and eject buttons at the same time: the cassette door will pop up and hand you the tape.

There's no comparable feature on the Sony. If you want the tape out, you have to turn on the power, wait for a redundant threading cycle, press eject, then wait for it to unthread and eject. This is just plain dumb. Even more annoying—again, like the Kodak—the tape unthreads between timer-recorded events, leaving large video glitches between different programs when you play them back.

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Another tape-threading anomaly I've noticed about Sony's U-loading decks is the way they go through a "double-threading" cycle when you insert a new tape or a tape that's been wound back to the plastic leader, using either its own BE-V8 rewinder/eraser or another brand of camcorder. Instead of threading the tape immediately, the machine starts to thread the tape, stops when it realizes there's not enough tape on the take-up reel to finish, unthreads again, fast forwards a short length of tape from the supply reel, and threads again. I took the top off one machine and watched the process. It goes through nine discrete "click and whirr" operations before settling down.

Since I use the Sony BE-V8 rewinder almost all the time, I've had to begin using it to fast forward my tapes in from the leader just a tad to give the VCR room to thread correctly, which it does with only three clicks and whirrs. If you haven't noticed the problem on your machines, it may be because you're rewinding tapes with them, where the problem doesn't show.

Except for this quirk, I have nothing but praise for Sony's BE-V8 bi-directional rewinder/eraser. It's extremely well built, and takes the wait out of rewinding tapes inside your VCR or camcorder.

With some machines, that can be long indeed. The Canovision takes an interminable seven minutes or so to shuttle a P6-120 tape from end to end. The BE-V8 takes two-and-a-half minutes.

As with the larger BE-V50 Beta rewinder (which only rewinds—there's no fast forward), you can also erase a tape before using it again. The added benefit here is that, if you own a Sony (or similar VCR from Aiwa, Kyocera, Fuji or Sanyo) with a flying erase head, you can't tell where a newly recorded show ends and an old one begins. There's no glitch or picture break-up to separate them, the way there is with half-inch equipment, or even some other 8mm decks.

Whether winding or erasing, the BE-V8 pulls a small loop of tape out of the shell and into the rewinder—a feature designed to reduce the risk of scratching it when it moves at high speed from one reel to the other.

As I reported in May, JVC's antagonism to 8mm is so intense it mounted an intensive campaign to convince dealers of the alleged "shortcomings" of 8mm, documenting its case with technically ambiguous claims. Since then, JVC has managed to persuade a lot of video

fence-sitters, unsure of whether to make and sell 8mm gear or stay with VHS, and endorse Compact VHS.

According to a report in a Japanese newspaper, that was accomplished by intimidating some ambivalent VHS companies to back away from 8mm or face having JVC yank their VHS license. Without the license they would be unable to continue to make their VHS machines, if they planned to add 8mm.

However, most of the inductees won't be making their own Compact VHS camcorders, preferring to buy them from JVC instead and adding their own label. This suits JVC just fine, since it has virtually cornered the market on Compact VHS manufacturing.

Had this happened stateside, I suspect the Justice Department might have looked askance. I don't think it will halt the growing popularity of the 8mm format. What we may see, however, is a year or so of Compact VHS, sort of an interregnum, to see if that format can cut a swath with consumers.

I think 8mm will win out and, someday, when this contentious format rivalry is behind us, there probably will be 8mm camcorders and VCRs with JVC's logo on them. After all, JVC was one of the 127 companies that gave 8mm their V technical blessing three years ago.

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Personal Computers, News, and Games

The MIDI Revolution

Computers first made music in the 1950s when programmers discovered novel ways to produce sounds. One amusing method used a transistor radio on top of a computer to pick up the machine's natural radio-frequency beeps and buzzes. Today video games and personal computers like the Commodore 64 (which has a sophisticated three-voice sound chip) make computer music commonplace. But a link between computers and powerful digital keyboards takes electronic music one step further.

The hardware and software standard responsible is known as MIDI, for Musical Instrument Digital Interface. The first programs to harness MIDI were simple record/playback schemes that mimicked multi-track tape recorders. One voice could be played on a synthesizer keyboard while another was captured by the computer's memory.

The brilliance of MIDI is that no sounds are recorded. Notes, octaves, durations, and other information about



KRIS BOYD

sounds are stored as "musical events." When a MIDI score is played back, the computer issues commands to synthesizers that recreate the actions of the original player.

Apple's Macintosh has become a showplace for MIDI development, thanks to a number of new software releases. MusicWorks in Boston, Mass. has created Megatrack XL (\$150), an elaborate MIDI sequencer that transposes keys and visually edits notes, durations, and voices. Up to 32 different synthesizers and drum

machines can be controlled at one time with the company's MacMIDI 32 interface.

Another ambitious program comes from Great Wave Software in Menlo Park, Calif. ConcertWare + MIDI (\$85) offers a staggering number of options. Music is composed by arranging notes on a video screen, and orchestrated with sounds produced by the Macintosh itself (from a library of sounds by synth programmer Joe West). The composition can also be sent to MIDI synthesizers.

Ties, beams, and slurs

(which contrast notes) are added to the score and printed out as sheet music. As an alternative to entering notes on a staff, ConcertWare + MIDI lets you play directly into the program from any MIDI keyboard. The music is displayed in standard notation.

Song Producer (\$395) plugs into the cartridge port of a Commodore 64 to help you control MIDI keyboards and instruments, and non-MIDI drum machines. It comes from one of the pioneers of electronic music, Moog Electronics in Buffalo, N.Y. Songstepper software, which comes with Song Producer, is a music composition system that works in real-time or step-time for layering up to 24 MIDI sounds.

The Atari 520 ST and 1040 ST computers use the same fast microprocessor as the Mac and have even greater video screen resolution, making them ideal for music applications. The ST series even has MIDI interfaces so the connection is easier. It could be that the ST series will one day rival the Mac and most other computers for sound work.

-Timothy Onosko

Disk Doppelgangers

Alter Ego (Activision, \$49.95 for the Apple II, IBM, and Commodore 64; \$59.95 for the Macintosh) allows you to relive—or prelive, if you have yet to reach some of the later stages of life—certain events common to most twentieth century Americans. By assuming someone else's personality you learn how certain events might have turned out if you'd been more careful, confident, or charming. You

begin in the womb, where you can stubbornly hang out for a while, come out peacefully, or emerge kicking and screaming.

From there, you get to live it all, from the time you discovered matches and tried to burn down your parents' house to retirement in a Miami condo. Watch out for the child molesters, don't take too many drugs, go for a good college and a satisfying career, and you'll last to a

ripe old age. The incidents are familiar, lightheartedly related, and enlivened by the wit of author Peter Favaro. His voice is your conscience, and can be a nagging or sarcastic reminder that you're something of a screw-up.

The female version of *Alter Ego* is not, its creators stress, radically different. It repeats incidents from the male version, adjusted for a feminine perspective, and it seems accurate.

There are many different ways to play *Alter Ego* since

you can choose which episodes to play and avoid, but the choices within episodes are limited. There is no way to really "win." You're judged on 12 qualities, like "social" and "intellectual." If you score over 60 out of 100 on each, you've done very well. My male counterpart tended to be smart but unhappy. As a female, I did well on everything except physical status. If she could only have quit smoking she might have qualified for sainthood.

—Louis Kesten

Sailing From Disk Under

The way some folks see it, things started to go to pot back in 1983, when a sailing yacht from Australia had the audacity to win the America's Cup. After all, the prize had been in Yankee hands for 132 years. Now you can help reclaim our national honor—thanks to a nifty new disk called *The American Challenge: A Sailing Simulation* (Mindscape, Apple II, IBM PC, \$39.95).

In American Challenge, you're the skipper. Name your boat, choose your course, hit "return" and you're off. Controlling the mainsail and the rudder, with an eye on the compass and the wind speed, you guide

your vessel to the finish buoys racing against the computer or a friend at the other end of a modem.

Get through seven trial races and you're ready for the America's Cup. That's where national honor comes in. Send your best Cup time to Mindscape to vie for a "top eight" spot. Winners get a modem and will compete for a trip to Australia to cheer for our team in the real life 1987 America's Cup Race.

American Challenge won't let you design your own secret hull, but the 3-D graphics give armchair Ted Turners a strong sense of the open sea. You may miss the



sun glinting off the water or the cool spray as your boat slices through the foam. But look at it this way: you can't capsize, you won't get sunburned, and you can still top the race off with a nice cold beer. —R.D. Miller

Wills and Won'ts

As a practicing New York State attorney, I was both skeptical and intrigued when DiskWill (Self-Help Legal Services, P.O. Box 10694, Minneapolis, Minn. 55440) crossed my desk. At home, the packaging claimed, you can "prepare and print a comprehensive will appropriate to your specific needs." Wills are generally standard documents that can become very complicated. At \$39.95 DiskWill is cheaper than a

lawyer, but not as inventive.

Forget about scattering your ashes to the winds or throwing a party for friends at the local pub after you die. Customizing with *DiskWill* is out. Even such basic provisions as disinheriting your children in such a way as to prevent them from contesting it is impossible. So are setting up trust funds and making gifts that depend on a future event like a high school graduation.

The program is easy to use and allows revisions. Only two wills—presumably for

husband and wife—can be used with one disk. The authors carefully explain the procedures for signing and witnessing. *DiskWill* claims to be legal in every state except Louisiana.

If you have the money, go to a lawyer—you'll probably need one. If you don't, try *DiskWill*. If nothing else, it will teach you the basics of wills and estates.

—David Kogelman

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Shrinkthink

Human Edge's *Mindprober*, with its instant personality analyses, proved that for less than the cost of an hour with a good shrink, you can find out what he would probably say after six months, minus the anxiety of hearing it in person. It also showed there are plenty of diskophiles ready to analyze themselves with the same brio others lavish on custom cars or, well, video systems.

The Luscher Profile by Mindscape (\$39.95 for the Macintosh, Apple II, and IBM versions and \$29.95 for the Commodore 64) should give them another tool—a home version of Dr. Max Luscher's 1947 correlation of colors and shapes to universal human qualities: lust, fear, anger, anxiety, and the

like. We are what we tint, says the test, which is widely used as a diagnostic aid.

To take it, you mouseclick through a series of 33 choices keyed to an accompanying booklet of colors, shapes, and shades. In less time than even Dr. Ruth requires, Dr. Max explains the path to inner peace with a three-page analysis of your answers. However, the mixand-match sentences of my own report seemed wildly off base as frequently as on, and uncannily like the profiles of five other test takers. It may not be wise to take it any more seriously than computerized versions of the I Ching. However valid the test itself, The Luscher Profile is little more than a parlor game. Color it puce.

-Stan Pinkwas

REST SELLERS/RECREATION

- 1. Microsoft Flight Simulator. IBM, PCjr. Microsoft.
- 2. Scenery Disks 1-6. IBM. C64. Sublogic.
- 3. King's Quest II. AP, IBM. Sierra On-Line.
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- 10. Ultima IV. AP, IBM, MAC, C64, AT. Origin Systems.

LEGEND: AP=Apple, APc=Apple IIc, APe=Apple IIe, AT=Atari, C64 = Commodore 64, COM=Commodore Pet/CBM, CP/M=514" and 8" formats, DEC=DEC Rainbow, DG=Data General, EPS=Epson QX-10, IBM=IBM-PC, MAC=Apple Macintosh, PCjr=IBM-PCjr, TIP=Texas Instruments Professional, TRS=TRS-80, VIC=Commodore Vic-20, VTR=Victor 9000, WNG=Wang Personal Computer, ZEN=Zenith 100.

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Audio Input

The Sound Side of Video

If you sing in the shower,

word is Japanese for "empty

refers to the practice of sing-

tra" records, in public (mainly

ing along to "empty orches-

orchestra"—that is, an orchestra without a singer. It

you'll love karaoke. The

Videodisc Sing-Alongs

by Ivan Berger



home singing is mostly practice so you'll sound good when swigging Sapporo at the local bar.

I've been to two karaoke bars. At one, in an outlying Tokyo neighborhood, we sang along with a karaoke machine that combined an amplifier and speakers with an eight-track tape cartridge player and a microphone mixer with reverb. The reverb added the resonance all shower singers know and love so well, while the full background orchestra added dimensions no shower could offer, even if you could find a shower stall big enough to hold a 12-piece combo.

In the second bar, a classier, expense-account establishment in midtown Tokyo, we had live accompaniment by a small combo. They

adjusted the key and tempo to match the singers' but the principle was the same.

Home karaoke is big business, too. Those ubiquitous, dual-well audio cassette decks the record companies think are made for illegal dubbing were created for home karaoke singing. You put a karaoke orchestra tape in one well, sing along through a mike, and record the combination on a blank tape in the other well. It helps polish your act.

Now Pioneer has added video. Pioneer Video has five (soon to be six) eight-inch Laser Karaoke Video Sing-Along discs for \$19.95 each, carrying five pop songs apiece. The arrangements are semi-big-band brassy, with no lead vocals, though a few have wispy choral backups. The visuals are typical low-budget pop videos, with lyrics superimposed.

Each lyric line flashes on the screen in gold, after which the words turn white, one at a time, to show when you're supposed to sing them. You can pop those discs into a LaserVision player and sing along. But with some additional hardware, home karaoke becomes jazzier, more high-tech, and closer to the original Japanese-bar experience.

The gear I added was Pioneer's SA-K50 Mixing Amplifier—a box about the same size as most home audio and video components (about 17 x 4 x 11 inches). It combines a mixer, a reverb device, and a small stereo amplifier. On its front panel are six sliding controls, two pushbuttons, two quarter-inch microphone jacks, a power switch, and LEDs to show you what's happening. On the back are a

pair of speaker terminals, four pairs of stereo jacks, and an AC convenience outlet.

To set up a home karaoke bar, feed the signal from your LV disc player into the SA-K50's inputs, then either hook two speakers to the terminals or feed the signal from the amp's rear-panel output jacks into the rest of your system. The LV disc signal needn't come directly from the disc player.

I hooked the SA-K50 into a tape loop on my audio receiver, where it also let me sing along with any other signals in my system, including those from my VCR, cable, and the receiver's audio inputs and FM/AM tuner. Plug a microphone into either front-panel input, and you're ready to roll. You are not, however, ready to rock. The musical arrangements on the karaoke discs aren't written that way.

To operate the system, press the button that selects the disc input, then cautiously adjust the main volume control and the control for your microphone input until you get the right balance between your voice and the orchestra.

If you turn it up too high, feedback from the speakers to the mike will generate a squeal, howl, or moan, depending on the acoustics of the situation. The Pioneer DM-700G microphone I used with my SA-K50, however, is directional, so you can aim it to maximize its pickup of your voice and minimize its pickup of the speakers. Should feedback ever get out of control while you're away from your system's controls. quash it by flicking the microphone's off switch.

Audio Input.

The DM-700G microphone is finished in gold, with a gilded mesh ball windscreen, to make you feel like a star, or at least pro. The windscreen includes a "pop" filter, so singing lines like "If a picture paints a thousand words, then why can't I paint you" (from "If," on karaoke disc No. 4) won't sound like a string of firecrackers.

There's also an echo control, to make your voice sound big and warm (remember what I said about singing in an echo-laden shower?) The bass and treble controls on the SA-K50 only affect the sound from the disc. Tape-monitor connections and a tape-monitor switch let you record your sing-alongs and play them back.

If you have no spare speakers, Pioneer suggests its CS-VX50s for use with the SA-K50. These are two-way types with 7-inch woofers and two 6-inch cone tweeters selling for \$200 per pair. Their magnets are shielded to keep from interfering with video monitor pictures even if the speakers are next to the monitors. I used Boston A40 and Baby Advent speakers, both of which worked fine.

Pioneer also has a simplified singalong device, the SD-K5 Karaoke SingAlong Module (\$99)—one of several plug-in modules that add versatility to Pioneer's SD-25A TV monitor. Other modules include the tuner, a picture-enhancer/color-controller, and an RGB module for computer graphics display. The monitor has slots for two such modules. Since the monitor has its own input selectors, amplifier, volume, and tone controls, the SD-K5 has only the two microphone input-level controls and an echo adjustment.

Not everyone will want an SA-K50 (or SD-K5), even in Japan. To use it, you need a LaserDisc player, and you must want to sing along with middle-of-the-road pop. It's great for parties, but it's also good for developing your vocal abilities and confidence.

I liked few of the songs (and, to be frank, liked even less my attempts to sing them), so I tuned out early. My wife, whose musical tastes are different, liked several of them, and sang them over and over until her renditions satisfied her. If we'd had a second mike, we could have sung duets, which would have been fun. Almost any microphone with medium impedance—about 1 to 5 kilohms—should do.

I'd also like to see a wider range of karaoke discs, including country/western, R&B, Broadway musicals, and opera. I've always wanted to sing the lead in *Boris Godunov*, and Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, but I don't expect to get a crack at those roles outside the privacy of my home. My vocal career peaked with the role of Pooh-Bah in my highschool *Mikado*.



INTRODUCING THE 8 millimeter IT'S SO WELL PUT TOGETHER,



The KODAK MVS Modular Video System is one of the world's newest, most advanced video systems, yet it's built on one of the world's oldest, most basic principles. The principle of building blocks.

You see, the KODAK MVS is a series of lightweight, compact, mix-and-match components that allow you to build the video system you want, then take it apart, change it or add to it whenever you want.

DESIGNED TO IMPROVE YOUR LIFE. NOT CONFUSE YOUR LIFE.

With the MVS, you can create a video system that fits almost any occasion and then change it whenever the occasion strikes you. Create a full-function VCR, a portable video camcorder or a six-track digital audio recorder. And because the MVS

is compatible with existing VHS or Beta units, you can even utilize your current video equipment. What's more, thanks to our unique snap-together modular docking system, connecting one component to another is a snap.

USE THE KODAK MVS AS THE SUM OF ITS PARTS. OR AS INDIVIDUAL PARTS.

At the heart of the MVS is the recorder, measuring a mere $6.5'' \times 5.3'' \times 2.6''$ and weighing about 2 pounds.

Used alone, it plays back prerecorded 8 mm video tape (amazingly, in a cassette barely larger than an audio cassette) and transfers or edits your current VHS or Beta tape library onto 8 mm format. But you haven't heard anything yet.







KODAK MODULAR VIDEO SYSTEM. IT EVEN WORKS TAKEN APART.



Because the MVS recorder is also an incredible audio system with six 2-hour tracks for up to 12 hours of playback in PCM digital stereo sound.

CREATE A LIGHTWEIGHT VCR THAT PERFORMS LIKE A HEAVYWEIGHT.

Simply snap the recorder into the MVS tuner/timer and you've got a state-of-the-art VCR that measures 15" x 9.5" x 3.3" and weighs less than 8 pounds. And this small VCR has a lot of features. Like 169 channels, cable-ready capabilities, stereo TV broadcast reception, three-week, 8-event unattended recording with on-screen recording capability, wireless remote and audio playback in PCM digital stereo.

MAKE HOME MOVIES WITHOUT THE BIG PRODUCTION.

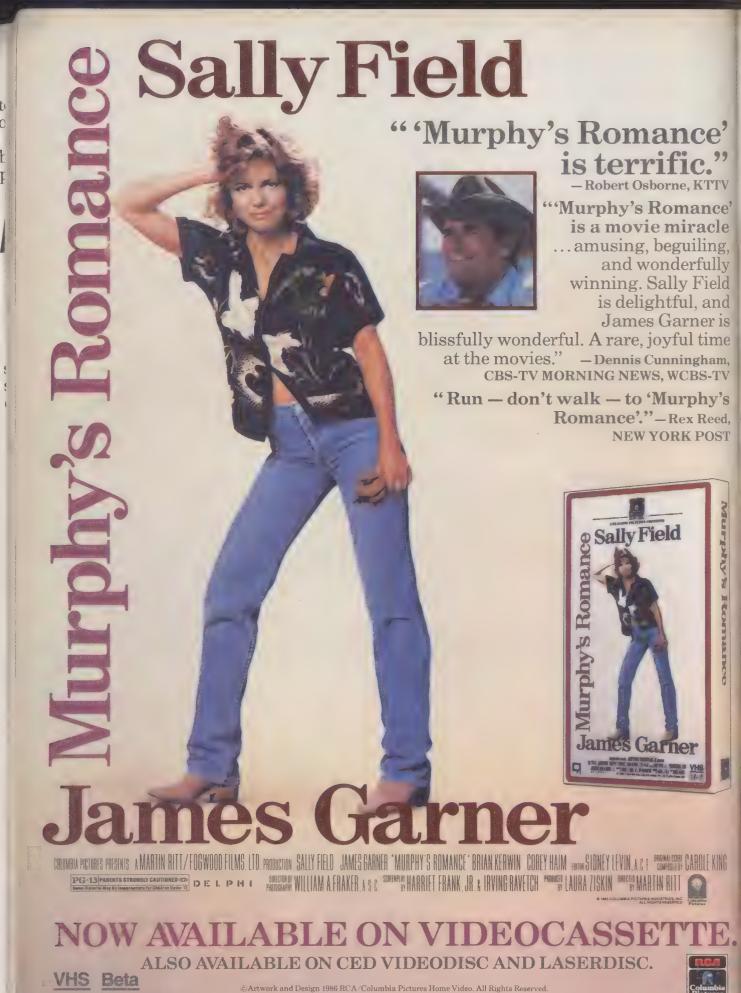
If making home movies is your forte, simply snap the MVS recorder into our video camera and you've got a video camcorder. At 9.5" x 5.5" x 5.5" small and about 4 pounds,

it's head and shoulders above the rest without being heavy on *your* head and shoulders. Make home movies, record sporting or family events with easy-to-use features, including auto focus, fade-in/fade-out controls, backlight compensation, 6:1 power zoom lens, electronic viewfinder and instant review of recorded images.

The 8 mm KODAK Modular Video System.

THE NEW VISION OF KODAK.





For additional information, circle No. 20 on Reader Service Card.

How I Shot My Summer Vacation

Taping Tips for Great Family Travelogues

BY MURRAY SLOVICK

he Europe of vacations is the Europe of photographs. Its monuments and great sites tower in our imaginations unencumbered by scaffolds or neglect. We return from their environs with their pictures as our memories—the Arc de Triomphe anchoring the

Champs Elysees, the Gothic Guild Halls of Brussels' Grand Place, the opulent Paris Opera preserved in our scrapbooks. How much more remarkable they would look on videotape instead of 5 X 7 snaps.

Personal vacation videos, shot on the run and edited in the den, can make even static encounters memorable. On a recent trip to Paris, Brussels, and Geneva, I traded my 35mm camera for Sony's Handycam camcorder. It handled the different environments with equal aplomb, recharged easily from hotel outlets, and made me the center of attention when I used it, since 8mm camcorders are still uncommon in much of Europe. Even better, I returned with great-looking travel videos, mementos that make it easy to relive and share with family and friends the places I visited and the people I met.



You can do the same and, with summer in full bloom, there's no better time. Indeed, this year may be better than others. Fears of terrorism have kept many tourists away from Europe, creating a lot of low-priced opportunities for those with the courage of their vacations. Taking video gear requires you to do more planning than a still camera would, but the results will be worth the extra effort.

GETTING READY

The first question is always: what to pack? The answer: as little as possible. If you load up on accessories, you probably won't take them farther than your hotel room. Get a protective video case—either soft sided or, better, hard. The jostling of your video gear from jetliners, trams, metros, taxis, and the like can scratch and damage your equipment.

A shell of metal or impact-resistant styrofoam eliminates the possibility. Make sure the bag measures no more than 9 by 13 by 23 inches—the limit for most airline

Take only your camera and portable VCR or camcorder, two high-capacity battery packs, the battery charger/AC power pack, a current converter and appropriate plugs, two cassettes, the remote control unit, and instruction booklets. Skip the photoflood lamps and tripods.

If you must review your videotapes each evening (other than through the electronic viewfinder) you'll run into television broadcast problems. Europe, for example, uses the PAL and SECAM systems, while the U.S. and Japan use NTSC. An alternative



Ascend the Eiffel Tower an hour before sunset and shoot until night falls.

to the hotel set is to take along one of the small portable monitors designed for VCR use. Otherwise, leave your A/V and RF cables home.

Read about the places you're going to visit and map out a taping plan for the most visually interesting sites. Check your equipment before you leave and charge at least one additional battery. Remember, most of the world uses 220 volts current, and converters often will not handle a polarized plug. Videocassettes are available throughout Europe, in both half-inch formats and 8mm, at prices comparable to those here. Purchase more as you need them

Always carry your video gear on board. Never check your equipment into the hold of an aircraft. If it isn't damaged by luggage handlers, your gear could end up in Milan while you fly to London. Don't be afraid of the airport X-ray machines. They won't harm videotape. I've put completed cassettes in such units throughout the world, including the powerful X-ray blasters in Hong Kong, without ill effect. Given today's tighter airport security you can, however, count on a hand inspection of your video bag.

If you are planning a trip to an underdeveloped country, find out in advance from the local consulate or embassy about what restrictions there may be in bringing video equipment into and out of the country. Some countries make you post a bond, sometimes very substantial, to ensure you don't sell the equipment on the black market. Find out, too, about restrictions on videotaping. Airports, even in Western countries, are often off-limits to videographers.

ON THE PROWL

A travel landmark may look uninspired but don't ignore it. A videotape about Paris without the Eiffel Tower would be incomplete. Include local people in all your scenes. Choose a subject-camera distance that clearly shows your subject's face and something of the setting. Try also to show enough to impart a sense of time of day from the light quality, sun angles, clocks, whatever.

Look for scenes that show the diversity in a given locale. Avoid visual and aural distractions—billboards, trash collection, traffic noise—by changing your shooting position.

Use basic shots to tie your scenes together. In Geneva, the splendid fountain on the lake throws water 250 feet into the air. The dazzling plume provides a natural introduction to a sequence about the city, eliminating the need for a voice-over. Follow with the multicolored sails of the fleet of small boats on the lake to heighten interest. Add famous monuments to give the scene historical perspective then intersperse shots of people in everyday activities, like sitting at outdoor cafes.

Even something mundane, such as commuters leaving a railway station on their way to the office, helps unite your scenes. Don't be afraid to cut in with scenes of modern structures for contrast. After decades of bland International Style buildings, a new vitality has appeared in modern architecture. Large cities have exciting new buildings well worth a few feet of tape.

If you want to give scale to an office tower or monument, find a foreground object such as a tree or a signpost. Note that



Include people in your shot of the Arc de Triomphe to show its scale.

No video record of a trip to Europe is complete without scenes of great museums like the Louvre or famous landmarks like the Paris Opera.

camcorders and cameras with infrared autofocus systems will misbehave when something passes closer to the camera than the subject.

ART FOR ART'S SAKE

No video record of a trip to Europe is complete without scenes in one of the Continent's great museums or galleries. Most museums have liberalized their videotaping policies. Now even the Louvre will let you shoot half-inch or 8mm video, though it may balk at pro-looking three-quarter inch systems.

Just as you can't use flash photography, you will not be permitted to use lighting other than the museum's. The reason is preservation. A photoflood in reflector can emit up to 800 watts, enough to damage fragile paintings. Fortunately, most museums provide adequate light given today's sensitive video cameras and camcorders. Better still, the house lighting is usually balanced and shadowless.

The prime objective of a video sequence in an art museum should be information. Examine all four corners of the viewfinder frame to avoid unwanted details. Let the viewer see the whole subject for a reasonable time by keeping the camcorder still. Don't zoom in and out just to add movement. You can change your shooting angle by bending your knees, raising up on your toes, or moving to a different location.

Composition will be a problem, since paintings usually aren't square or proportioned for a viewfinder. One alternative to a tight shot is to shoot the whole image then follow it with a detailed study of its elements, remembering to direct the viewer to the nuances of the work. It is possible to reproduce fine art on videotape so accurately that every brushstroke and crack in a canvas is visible.

Don't try to pack too much information into one scene. The Hall of Mirrors at the Palace of Versailles is an excellent example of a space too big and too crowded with *objets d'art* to capture adequately in one or two shots. By the same token, plan your soundtrack in advance. If you don't, you run a greater risk of winding up with a dull, lifeless monologue that will bore your audience. It isn't necessary to know exactly what you are going to say as much as come up with a way to use the material at hand.

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA

Many museums have guided tours on audio cassette, which can help you build
good outline that combines narration with a
fast-paced, visual record of your visit. In

shooting the Paris Opera house, for example, I developed the following voice-over from the material in my guidebooks. Here's how a sequence might run, with the video scenes in parenthesis:

(Opening shot. Overall outside view) "The Paris Opera, one of the finest examples of nineteenth-century architecture, has over its steel skeleton a mask of extravagant decoration. Walking in (entering the edifice, narrator's viewpoint) one passes the *Groupe de la Danse* by Car-

mented with eight tapestries by Mazerolles, made by *Manufacture des Gobelins*. Finally, one reaches *la Salle*—the auditorium—whose ceiling has been covered since 1964 by a Chagall masterpiece (hold the shot long enough for the visual composition to sink in) with luminous figures standing against red and gold tones, enhanced by the sparkling of the great chandelier (shot of chandelier, closing shot of stage, focus dissolve, if available, or pause; end of scene)."



Capture Brussels' Grand Place with light coming from the side at a 45-degree angle.

peaux (shot of the work)—the original is in the Louvre. As you cross the high entrance hall (continuing to shoot while walking, shooting from the narrator's perspective) and walk up *le Grand Escalier*—the main staircase—you ascend through a setting of onyx and marble (panning slowly) reminiscent of truly splendid society gatherings.

"Next in sight is the arch of *l'avant foyer*—the front foyer—(zoom, if available, for closeup; change camera angle away from narrator) covered with Venetian mosaics. Two small halls dedicated, one to the Moon (brief shot) the other to the Sun (another brief shot) connected to *le Grand Foyer*—the main foyer—(detailed view) a princely gallery where allegoric frescoes by Baudry hang in an extravagance of gold.

"Returning via *le Buffet* (resuming the narrator's walking perspective) the visitor comes upon *la Rotonde du Glacier*, orna-

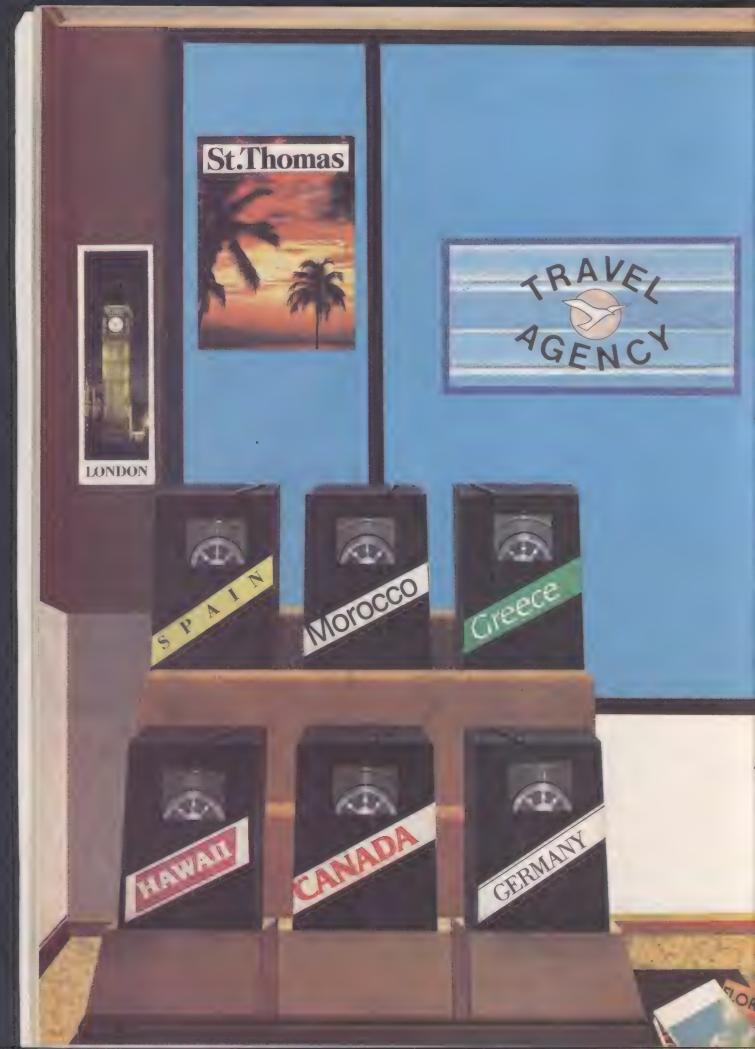
SQUARING OFF

If you're travelling farther afield, the Grand Place in the center of Brussels' Old Town is an unusually picturesque site for an outdoor scene. Begin the segment by walking around the square, a virtual museum framed by Baroque and Gothic Guild Halls and the Town Hall, and observing the light from different angles.

The best shots can be captured with the light coming from your left or right at a 45 degree angle. This adds depth to the scene, clearly showing the forms and intricate patterns on the buildings. Return to the Grand Place at different times of day to see how the light changes, and at night. The buildings are strikingly illuminated.

The Town Hall Tower, built by Jan Van Ruysbruck in 1455, has a pierced spire. With a zoom lens set at telephoto, you can

continued on page 114





See The World For \$24.95

Travel Videos—The Latest Twist in Vacation Planning

BY JULIA LISELLA

ou're waiting for Fellini to discover you at a crowded sidewalk cafe in Rome, sipping your cappuccino. Or you're walking down a deserted beach, white sand, clear water, a tropical breeze at your neck. Or you're rafting down Delaware's white water rapids, or ballooning over the French countryside. In one afternoon you can transport yourself almost anywhere, via your VCR and the emergent travel video genre.

What exactly are travel videos? At best, they are visual guides that relay information, intrigue or tempt, and offer a TV-eye perspective on your holiday destination. At worst, they are endless hours of picture postcards, or extended video ads for

hotels and airlines.

You can usually avoid those feature-length commercials which airlines and chambers of commerce produce for travel agencies to entertain clients on hectic Saturday afternoons. Consumer travel videos are, for the most part, independently produced, and available through catalogues, book stores, video stores, and even souvenir shops. (Some, however, are partially sponsored by airlines or hotels, so be careful. Not all are identified as such.)

Unlike how-to's in the worlds of exercise and cooking, travel video hasn't yet found a Jane Fonda or Craig Claiborne to set the pace. Productions range from basement operations to slick professional shows, with a semi-famous personality escorting the viewer and a fully-equipped camera crew through the backroads of Alaska or the side-streets of Paris. Unfortunately, like travel itself, these videos can be big disappointments, despite their appealing and exotic promise.

Major and minor companies alike are joining the tourist video

ILLUSTRATION BY HOVIK DILAKIAN



information craze with minimal market research. Jim Conners, president of International Video Network, a producer and distributor of many diverse travel videos, got the idea while living in London. "I found out that three million Americans visited London in 1985. I also knew that the sale of VCRs was reaching one million a month. I figured there ought to be a business in there somewhere." Outside the video industry, such full-speed-ahead enthusiasm is nowhere in sight. The most likely candidates from the world of travel books have not yet even whispered about entering video. Frommer, Fielding, Michelin, and the like are all waiting on the sidelines for travel videos to either flop or prosper before making any commitments. A survey of these guidebook publishers suggests an attitude that anything a video can do a book can do better. Realistically, while video can relay information in a different way than travel guides, it cannot substitute for them, and the best travel videos don't pretend to.

ATLANTIC CROSSING

The Charm of London (International Video Network), a "Video Visit" narrated by Susannah York, is photographed so that you actually feel as though you're getting in and out of cabs with Susannah and walking around with her. The half-hour tape doesn't pack in everything you need to know about London; instead, you start from a central geographical location to make two full-day tours of the city. Sights appear in a logical, realistic sequence: a church next to a park next to a great place for lunch next to... The tape suggests what you can do in a few days, but makes London seem so pleasant you'll want to stay two weeks. Free of the corniness of most travel videos, it bears repeated viewings, first to familiarize vourself with different sights, then just to sit back and enjoy the city's many facets.

I.V.N.'s tapes are commercial-free—no ads for expensive hotels or banquet halls—and are available in book stores, video stores, and even places like Harrod's of London.

If you're a lazy traveler—someone who buys a plane ticket and then gets last-minute panic about where to stay and what to do—Laura McKenzie's *Travel Tips* to a dozen different destinations may be the answer. Her tapes are chock full of major and minor information: the French take their dogs everywhere; at Rome's Porta

Portese start your haggling from half the asking price. Because her tapes are so packed, there's scant space for surprises. We know about the Louvre, but how many people will search out the Rodin Museum? Boat rides down the Seine are here, but not the history of the Shakespeare bookstore, a popular stop for American tourists that might make a splendid visual treat for a tape on Paris.

Naturally, one videotape can't do everything, and it's a shame Laura McKenzie tries so hard. Her videos strive to supplant good guidebooks, giving such detailed information as museum hours, average meal prices, etc. Travelers who don't like doing

Travel videos
offer vicarious
trips to Paris,
London, Greece,
Hawaii, and
the Caribbean

much homework before trips will find these video guides a solid source of quick information. Each is roughly an hour, and employs the same format and background music. Sample restaurant menus, glossaries, and other general information are also displayed. Republic Pictures has made their series the most visible now on the market by using all of its regular distribution channels to move the tapes into consumers' hands.

PROMOVISION

Travelvision's 16 tapes have a common format—18 minutes of footage of a destination and about 20 minutes of promotional trailers from hotels, airlines and touring companies. But that's where the consistency ends. The difference between its tapes on, say, Cancun and Lisbon is enormous.

Cancun is a man-made resort of highrise hotels, buggy cars, and oversized sombreros for sale. Any travel agent can provide you with thoroughly adequate pamphlets about tour packages to Cancun. On the other hand, a Cancun video should do much more: explore interesting sidetrips, for instance. The traveler ought to know about the nearby Mayan ruins, or Isla Mujeres, a quiet island village reachable from Cancun by ferry that is more Mexican than all of Cancun. Travelvision visits the town for less than 30 seconds; I spent eight idyllic days there, and less than two hours on Cancun's crowded and noisy main strip.

Travelvision's Lisbon, Portugal tape, however, offers an enticing invitation. The rooftop colors are vibrant. Glimpses of sidewalks made of mosaics suggest the city's rich history. Side streets bustle with tourists of all nationalities mingling with the Portuguese. The promotional footage that follows glides over names of better hotels to give you factual information about Lisbon's weather, official language, and electric standards. Some Lisbon tour operators are mentioned in passing. If you rent this before your trip, it will not only put you in the right frame of mind, but will help remind you of last-minute articles (like a voltage converter for your hair dryer) you may want to bring.

TRIPS TO REMEMBER

Why should one company's tapes be so inconsistent? Perhaps it has to do with the nature of the locales. Most tapes about typical resort areas—like Hawaii, Cancun, the Caribbean—are less than gripping. Characteristically, Kodak's Greece tape is more interesting and intriguing than its Hawaii tape. Although the use of traditional island music on the latter is refreshing the producers concentrate on the kitsch trappings designed for the American tourist, like a Kodak-sponsored hula dance festival.

The company's visit to Greece is far better thought out. While all of Kodak's tapes are slickly produced, this one is especially good, showing the islands as well as the artists and craftsmen at work there. The program includes an interview with an American expatriate living in Mykonos and a visit to a young furmaker in his studio.

Kodak's distribution system is also above par. By joining their Video Exchange Club you can view a tape once or twice, return it and order another. There are currently under a dozen titles in their video library; more are sure to follow. (One special note: all discuss how to take good photographs while traveling.)

Some companies are pitching their videos to the souvenir marked. *McKenzie*



and I.V.N. tapes are sold in airport gift shops as well as regular outlets. But travel videos are still best suited for pre-travel rent or loan. Would you buy a Michelin guide on the way home?

HEY, LOOKIT!

Video is becoming one of the decade's high-tech cottage industries. All you need to get into the business is a small duplicating system (or access thereto), pretty packaging, and a little help from friends. Using the hungry home video market to resuscitate old material, two syndicated television shows, Journey to Adventure with Gunther Less and Passport to Adventure with Hal and Halla Linker are now available on video.

Less has a pleasantly thick German accent and seems to genuinely enjoy meeting people. His show is done in broadcast style, featuring interviews with "real" people as well as dynamic tourist bureau speakers. In Less' Ireland tape he is served an indeterminate plate of pale whites and yellows in a quaint inn. He asks in his most enthusiastic voice, "And is this a spec-i-a-lity of Ireland?" The hostess smiles demurely and says, "Why yes, you've got your Irish bacon, boiled cabbage, and boiled potatoes." Gunther digs in with gusto, exclaiming, "maaavelous." I wish he'd abandon the impromptu style and leave the boiled potatoes to our imagina-

The Journey to Adventure tapes tend to be repetitive. Less is good at relaying the flavor and charm of the places he visits, but provides no geographical sense of where things are relative to each other and few real travel tips are offered. For all of Gunther's enthusiasm, there's little impact, for instance, in a Caribbean tape that suggests a visit to Haiti-"gentle people on a voodoo island." (On the plus side, Less' tapes offer a sales incentive-\$50 off a round-trip international Pan Am flight.)

Shilo Productions, a California video company, recently acquired the Linker Film Library, consisting of three-quarters of a million feet of 16mm color film from the Linker family's travels. Their shows, Wonders of the World and Three Passports to Adventure, ran in television syndication for about 20 years. One tape in Shilo's series, The Golden Domes of Moscow, compiles Linker films from the '50s and '70s. Despite some historical significance, it's a bit dated for wideo travel guide. Like it or not, travel is often colored by the political climate of the times, and some of their soon-to-be-released titles—Savage Warriors of New Guinea and Adventure in Afghanistan—betray their age.

FINDING YOUR WAY

Distribution of travel video is varied. Exchange clubs and mail order catalogues carcontinued on page 114

St.Thomas

Available locales: Paris, Le Lou-



102002

vre, Versailles. 1986. 55m. ea. \$99.95 ea. 900 Broadway, New York City, 10003; 212-673-3113.

International Adventure Video.

Heritage of the Pharaohs. 1984. 50m. \$29.95. (Newsletter catalogue available for \$2.) 400 Webster, Suite 140, Palo Alto, Calif. 94301; 415-321-9943.

International Video Network.

Available titles: Alaska Outdoors, Israel the Holy Land, Lake Powell, Monterey/Carmel, Bath: England's Roman Spa, The Charm of London, San Francisco Bay Cruise, San Francisco City Tour, Hawaii: A Rainbow Adventure, The Sights and Sounds of Hawaii. 24 - 60m. ea. \$24.95 - \$39.95 ea. 3744 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Suite 102, Lafayette, Calif. 94549; 800-443-0100.

Journey to Adventure with Gunther Less.

Available locales: London and Ireland, Germany, Surprising Europe, Christmas Around the World, The Caribbean 70-83m. ea. \$29.95 ea. 430 W. 54 St., New York, N.Y., 10019; 212-489-8130; 800-457-0056.

Kodak Video Exchange Club.

Exploring America series: Grand Tetons, Mississippi, Yellowstone, Hawaii: the Picture Islands. Exploring the World series: The Alps: A Discovery in Pictures, Britain/Ireland: An Adventure in Pictures, Canada: A Holiday in Pictures, Greece: A Celebration in Pictures, Travel Scandinavia, China: A Journey in Pictures. 30m. ea. \$29.95 club membership fee. Also available in 8mm. 175 Humboldt St., Rochester, N.Y., 800-237-8400, ext. 250; in Fla. 800-282-1469, ext.

Laura McKenzie's Travel Tips.

Available locales: Athens, Hawaii, Spain and the Costa del Sol, Los Angeles, Egypt, San Francisco, Rome, Paris, London, Morocco, Ireland, Switzerland. 60m. ea. \$24.95 ea. Republic. 12636 Beatrice St., P.O. Box 66930, L.A., Calif. 90066; 213-306-4040.

Shilo Productions.

The Golden Domes of Moscow, The Mysteries and Splendours of Ancient Egypt, Paradise in the South Seas. The France Nobody Knows. The Holy Land. \$24.95 ea. 14755 Ventura Blvd., Ste. 1604, Sherman Oaks, Calif. 91403; 818-784-1146.

Travel Images.

Great Balloon Adventures, White Water Rafting, Mexican Riviera, Sherpa Expeditions-Nepal, World Balloon Tour in Spain, Vancouver/World Exposition '86, Mexican Pyramid Tours. 30 - 45m. ea. \$29.95 ea.

P.O. Box 1980, Laramie, Wyom. 82070; 800-423-2820; in Calif. 800-344-6062.

Travel Video Corp.

New Orleans, Orlan-

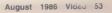
do, Cayman Islands, Old West Trail Country, Cruise with Royal Viking Line, Florida Gulf Coast, Cruise on the Tropicale, Cruise on the Festivale, Ski Colorado, Ski Vermont. 30m. ea. \$29.95 ea. 3320 E. Shea Blvd. Phoenix, Ariz. 85028; 800-826-5557, 602-996-5222.

Travelvision International.

Available locales: Amsterdam, The Netherlands, Acapulco, Mexico, Banff/Lake Louise Canada, Cairo, Egypt, Fantome Windjammer, Bahamas, Flying Cloud Windjammer/British Virgin Islands, Freeport, Bahamas, Guatemala, Jamaica, Lisbon, Portugal, Miami and the Beaches, Nassau, Bahamas, Puerto Vallarta, St. Thomas/St. John. 45m. ea. \$39.95 ea. 5630 Beverly Hill, Houston, Texas, 77057; 713-975-7077; 800-325-3108 outside Texas.

World of Cruise Ships.

1985. 45m. \$29.95. ("The Video Schoolhouse" catalogue also available.) Sallyforth 2611 Garden Rd., Monterey, Calif. 93940. 408-375-4474.





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To continue in the charitable spirit of Comic Relief, profits from the sale of the video will be donated to projects in the National Health Care for the Homeless program.

Take home "The Best of Comic Relief." You'll get all the laughs that you could want. And you'll give the homeless the relief that they need.

Available on VHS and Beta for \$39.95. To send contributions write to Comic Relief, P.O. Box 22008, Los Angeles, CA 90040, or call toll-free 1-800-528-1000.

KARL-LORIMAR



Ich Bin Ein Berlitzer

BY LINDSY VAN GELDER

Our Far-Flung Correspondent Grapples With Language Courses on Tape

hen I first learned I would be taking a business trip to Zurich, I panicked. Sure, I could communicate in German—but only if the person I was speaking to happened to be sneezing at the time. I needed a crash course, and I liked the idea of learning a language on my VCR. In real life, the spoken word comes at you with gestures and eye contact. A video seemed like the next best thing to seeing and hearing a foreign person speak.

Living Language German sounded great, too: five lessons, each pegged to a different tourist situation—airport, hotel, street, restaurant, and department store.

Like most tourists and business travelers, I wasn't especially interested in learning to discuss Goethe and Hegel with the locals. What I really wanted was a fast, practical guide to getting around—crucial phrases like "Where is the bathroom?," "Do you take credit cards?," "How much is that cuckoo clock in the window?" and "Lots of sauerkraut, please, but hold the pig's feet." Living Language German, by Crown Video (1 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016), runs 91 minutes and costs \$39.95. It promised to be not only practical but effortless. "This learning program is so simple and easy," according to the packaging, "that all you have to do is look, listen

and you cannot help but learn to speak."

I settled back and prepared to turn into

Marlene Dietrich.

The video began with the sound of oompah bands and travelogue shots of castles on the Rhine. (The program is oriented strictly to Germany. If they use slightly different forms of the language in Switzerland or Austria, you won't learn about them here.) Cut to a tweedy American. He explained that I was about to watch a scene of two tourists arriving at the Frankfurt airport, and probably wouldn't understand a word of it. "Don't worry," he assured me. "Just try to be aware of the sounds and rhythms presented."



'Living Language French' uses phrases no one would need: 'Do you like good restaurants?' Non, I like bad restaurants.



Sure enough, I didn't understand a word, although I could tell the scene involved two dorky-looking, flight bagwielding middle-Americans who were asking for information from a German airline clerk. I was disappointed to see that the scene didn't take place in the real Frankfurt airport at all. Except for a few dinky sound-effects at the beginning, like jets taking off, the skit was strictly talking heads.

After the scene was over, Living Language's format became clear. Mr. Tweedy Commentator would explain some grammatical or vocabulary point in English, then the folks in the skit would say things in very slow German to illustrate the commentator's point. Lesson 1 covered how to address people in German, how to say please, a brief explanation of noun gender forms, a few pleasantries (good morning, hello, goodbye, etc.) and prepositions; and a few forms of the verbs to be, to go, and to come. The actors paused after each phrase, giving you time to repeat it. According to the commentator, it's helpful to tape your session with an audio recorder, then listen to see how close your pronunciation comes to that of the actors. Of course, a camcorder would be even better.

The actors also introduced some words that help you get from an airport into town—like the German words for bus, taxi, cheap, expensive, near, far, and city center. At the end of the lesson, the original airport skit was repeated, but very slowly. Even after watching the video only once, I was able to understand a couple of words. At this point, the commentator recommends you go back and go over the lesson again, if necessary, before moving on.

However, this was when I discovered the program's most horrible flaw. As an actor would say something in German, an English subtitle would flash across the screen. The idea, presumably, is that you learn to associate sounds with their meaning. But there were virtually no German subtitles, here or later. In other words, the program won't teach you what a particular word looks like if you encounter it—only what it sounds like. To make matters worse, the English subtitles tended to be pretty low rent. They were often a few seconds out of sync with the voices, and on many occasions you could see the actors glancing offscreen at their scripts.

I happen to be the kind of person who often learns best by memorizing what I read, so I may be especially sensitive in this area, but I think most tourists would agree. After all, a lot of what one encounters in a foreign country is in print form—menus, timetables, street signs, and the like. Even an accompanying vocabulary workbook would have helped.

Lesson 2 repeats the same format—a fast-talking, incomprehensible skit (this time, at the hotel) followed by pointers from the commentator, phrases by the actors, and a slow version of the original skit. The points cover learning to count from one to twenty-five, the days of the week, telling time, and vocabulary for reservations and hotel facilities.

For some reason, virtually all the handy-dandy hotel phrases in the lesson are cheerful, upbeat comments one would only use chatting up the maid—for instance, "the closet is big," "the room is freshly made," and "the shower is clean." (Do the video makers not want us to sound like whiney, complaining Ugly Americans?) Another problem is that we only learn how to get a double room with a bath, not twin beds, a shower but no private toilet, or any of a number of other commonly available European arrangements. Nor do we learn how to ask if breakfast is included in the cost of the room.

SWAN DIVE

Lesson 3, "Scenes on the Street," finds our tourist couple asking a Frankfurt traffic cop for directions to the Golden Swan restaurant, which was recommended to them by the hotel clerk in Lesson 2. The commentator explains the different types of restaurants in Germany, from wine bars to pastry shops. (Again, without knowing how the words look in German, how would you tell them apart from street signs?) Grammar and vocabulary points include contractions, useful verbs (to look for, to know, to help, to walk, to give, and to be), and-finally-such ever-helpful phrases as "Do you speak English?" and "Could you please speak a little slower?"

Lesson 4 takes place in the Golden Swan. The vocabulary involves food and related items like knife, fork, and spoon. New verbs include the words for eat, drink, take, pay, and recommend. I noticed that the word for "check" is pronounced rashnung by the waiter and recknung by

Mr. Tourist, with no explanation why. A good point is that you learn to ask for local culinary specialties.

Lesson 5, "At the Store," shows Mr. and Mrs. Tourist buying a brown leather briefcase. We learn the names of colors, a few relevant words (buy, see, cost, how much), and how to count above 25. For some reason the video makers decided to put German subtitles on the screen for the numbers. This only makes me more upset about all the German words I don't know how to spell, since the words don't look anything like they're pronounced. For example, the German word for 70—Siebzig—is pronounced, zeeb-sish, not seeb-zig.

Mr. Tweedy Commentator reappears at this point to wish us good bye and good luck, and to deliver a commercial for Crown's *Living Language German* on audio cassette or record, 40 lessons with a conversation manual and a dictionary.

Maybe I'm a cynic, but the pitch made me think there was a clever, dollars-and-cents reason for crippling the video by leaving out the German subtitles. Just as IBM deliberately created the PCjr home computer without enough features to compete seriously with the more expensive IBM PC, I think Crown doesn't want to undercut its established audio sales.

Crown also released Living Language Spanish and Living Language French (\$39.95 each). The Spanish version seems like a clone of the German script except the actors are different and the American couple goes to the Golden Chicken restaurant instead of the Golden Swan. The video begins with flamenco music and shots of people stomping on grapes instead of an oompah band.

I was more interested in the French video, since I speak French. I do have a few quibbles. The course teaches learners to say je vous en prie for you're welcome, when there are at least two easier-to-remember ways to say the same thing: merci a vous and de rien. It teaches three ways to structure the asking of a question when one would undoubtedly do. It tells people how to order their meat medium and medium rare, but not very rare—bleu. And it used a few phrases no normal person would ever need—"Do you like good restaurants?" Non, I like bad restaurants, monsieur.

continued on page 114

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SCUBACAM ARRIVES

Lights! Camera! Bubbles!

New Marine Housings Take 8mm Home Video Into the Deep

BY ANNE FLINN

always wished I could be Jacques Cousteau riding manta rays and petting doloning them, seeing and filming the world underwater, making the shows that put me into a dream-like state. I wanted to be able to suspend invself in the water, virtually weightless, watching—and recording—the creatures of the sea.

Now that I'm responsible for videotaping

Now that I'm responsible for videotaping tourists scuba diving at a resort on Grand Cayman Island. I get the chance to play Jacques Cousteau every day. In the exquisitely clear and densely populated waters of our part of the Caribbean (south of Cuba and west of Jamaica) it's a good bet that vacationing divers will encounter huge

The Marine Pack's convenience helped me get unusual shots of groupers, lobsters, and sharks.



(Above) The author with Sony's Marine Pack and (below) the Hypertech H6



groupers, angelfish, tarpon, graceful eagle rays, scary moray eels, and schools of "Cayman piranha"—the yellowtail snappers and sergeant majors that swarm around divers who dare to feed fish. Taking home a souvenir of these experiences in the form of a videotape is fast becoming as popular as still photography.

For the past year and a half, being the producer-director-cinematographer and acting coach for these custom-made television specials has meant lugging a 25-pound combination of a video camera and a marine housing up and down the beach to our boat three times a day. It's great for losing weight and building muscles, but I knew there had to be something easier.

I felt the Sony Handycam was a step in the right direction, but, like many, was skeptical of the 8mm format. Besides, there weren't any underwater housings for the camera. Faster than you can say Calypso (Cousteau's boat, of course), all this has changed. A number of companies are mak-

ing units now, and I have had a chance to use four.

The Sony Marine Pack is the most attractive and lightest of the units. It's made of strong, high-impact plastic that opens into two pieces, fore and aft, with the Handycam (minus its detachable grip) fitting snugly inside. Three strong latches secure the housing. Leaded handles provide almost perfectly neutral buoyancy underwater. The trigger is just forward of the right grip, in a natural position for your finger. It is a well-made, simple-to-use piece of equipment. The first time I hopped in the water with the Marine Pack, I smiled throughout the entire dive. "This is so easy!" I kept saying to myself.

Sony has made some interesting compromises in developing the Marine Pack. The optical viewfinder on the Handvcam is ignored in favor of a big, open, pop-up viewframe at the top rear of the unit. It turned out to be surprisingly accurate, and simple to use. I had my doubts about the flat port Sony decided to use; most housings come with dome ports that allow for special lenses, more light, and wider angles of view. Instead, the Marine Pack comes with a specially-designed wide angle lens fitted inside the case so that the Handycam lens butts up against it. The combination produces excellent video, with good depth of field and, to my mind, a more natural depiction of the sizes of the various denizens of the deep.

Most of the diving we do in the Caymans takes place in less than 50 feet of water on bright, sunny days, and lighting isn't much of a problem. A light attachment is available for the Marine Pack, but its design limits it to illuminating nearby objects. Attached to the right handle, with a 50-watt bulb and a battery pack encased in a single housing, the unit has a limited range of motion. You can move the light up and down, but can't swivel from side to side or, better yet, detach the unit and move it around. The small bulb insures you're not going to get burn-in while doing close-ups. This is important since you don't have an electronic viewfinder to monitor, but it also means that close-ups are all you'll be able to shoot during deep or night dives.

The battery pack was good for about 30 minutes when I tried it, but since the battery charger wasn't available I can't say if that's an average time between charges. In general, though, 30 minutes is what I expect when using an underwater lighting unit.

GROUPER THERAPY

During my first dive, at Aquarium Reef, it was clear this small, light video system was a major step foward in underwater videography. It was simple to shoot using

only one hand, which allowed me to find a pair of big groupers that inhabit this part of the world-we call them Ozzie and Harriet-and pet them, videotaping all the while.

Further down the reef, my diving buddy was looking at a lobster hiding in a crevice of coral. Quickly, I swam over. Although my air tank made me too large to swim inside, the Marine Pack's small profile let me reach into the crevice for a terrific shot. There was no way I could have ever gotten so close to critters using the bigger housings standard video cameras require.

Perhaps the best feature of the Marine Pack is the one-button-control. On a later dive, I headed for Toffers Reef, an area known for sharks. It is always a thrill to see these majestic creatures, no matter how experienced the diver. Twenty minutes into the dive, we still hadn't spotted a shark. I became absorbed in filming a butterfly fish. It departed. I turned the camera off and swam around a coral head to find myself facing a beautiful seven-foot Black Tip shark.

I stared in amazement. My finger instinctively hit the trigger. Of course, I never took my eye off the shark! Had I been there with my half-inch camera and deck, she would have been gone by the time I hit "rec/play" and checked the viewfinder.

Pure speed isn't the only benefit of one-button-control. It's especially valuable in an environment where air consumption, time at depth, and other technical concerns must take priority.

When shooting underwater, lens filters can be critical to the quality of your tape. Absent any filter, the picture saturates with blues and greens. Even brilliant colors go flat. In our part of the world, where the water is a light blue, the orange filter Sony provided was a better choice than the red one, but both took a backseat to the UR Pro filter. Sony is looking into the UR Pro now and I predict it will be available in a Marine Pack fitting before long, if it isn't already. It's made by Underwater Research Products, Box 455, Naperville, Ill. 60566, and costs \$65.

The filters are very easy to use with the Sony unit, screwing onto the flat port in much the same manner as a filter on a 35mm still camera. In waters with greener hues, the filters Sony supplies may be all you'll need. Aside from the improved picture, there's another good reason to use filters: to protect the port. Since it is built directly into the unit, replacing a scratched one will mean getting it to a Sony service

During our first test dive, we took the unit to 100 feet. When we stopped at 10 feet on the way back to the surface, we got a few drops of water in the unit. The O ring

around the seal in our test unit had lost its resiliency after repeated use, and failed to regain its shape as the water pressure eased during our decompression ascent. Repeated dives with the unit to 50 feet did not cause the leak to recur, but it suggests that it would be wise to replace the O ring every six months. The Marine Pack will sell for \$999, the light for \$499, and the filters for \$99 each.

HYPER HOUSING

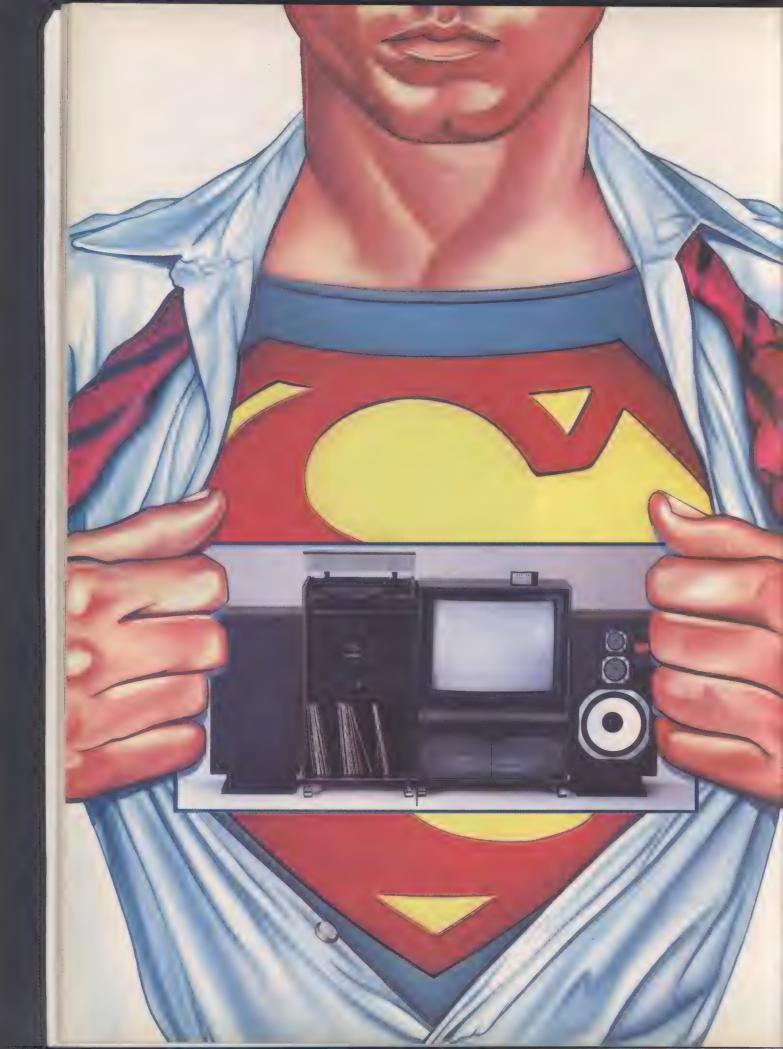
Hypertech makes a Handycam housing that features a big plexiglas port at the back of the unit that opens to take the Handycam, grip and all. The optical viewfinder is on the top middle of the unit and features a very accurate wide angle ground-glass lens. The Hypertech has a single handle on the right with a thumb trigger, which some



divers may prefer. Instead of weighting the handle, leads are fixed to the bottom of the unit. The dome port will have a lot of fans and, as on the Marine Pack, there is a built-in wide angle lens. The optional light has an arm that attaches quickly at the same point as the handle. A very large battery pack can be attached to the base of the housing. Although the unit is a bit heavier than the Marine Pack, it's well balanced and easy to use underwater. Designed to be functional, it doesn't have Sony's sharp looks but, given its big battery pack, dome port, and wider-angle lens, the Hypertech would seem to be a better choice for situations where lighting is critical. The Hypertech H6 sells for \$695, and the Hyperlight for \$1595. Hypertech is located in Pompano Beach, Fla, and can be contacted at 305-782-4448.

Aqua Vision Systems produces a unit called the Mini8. Unlike the Marine Pak and Hypertech, it's made of aluminum, and

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A Second-Generation Update on All-in-One Home Entertainment Centers

SUPER SYSTEMS

• BY MARTIN PORTER •

New consumer electronics products come about in varied ways. The VCR, the video camera, and the camcorder are offsprings of professional broadcasting equipment. The compact disc, with its advanced optical-laser wizardry, was designed for consumers right from the start.

But what about the super-system?

The super-system is the ultimate in one-stop home entertainment shopping. It refers to single-brand, integrated audio/video packages that combine everything from a TV and a turntable to a Hi-Fi VCR and a compact disc player into a single rack of equipment.

VIDEO reported on the first wave of super-systems in January 1985, with "High Tech, High Ticket." Now even more manufacturers are on the integrated component bandwagon. Some are audio manufacturers trying to cash in on video's success. Others are primarily video manufacturers testing the audio waters. Either way, it takes a discriminating consumer to decide if all of the packaged components deliver the best entertainment value for the dollar.

The origin of these latest audio/video products isn't as technology-driven as their black racks make it appear. In fact, they probably came about as a marketing gimmick. Imagine a high-level meeting in the cushioned offices of a major video manufacturer:

"Customers are stacking TVs alongside their Hi-Fi's," the sales manager explains. "They're even starting to ask that the TVs look like our audio receivers—go figure it out."

"Sounds like an opportunity for a new product," mulls the marketing manager. "Let's take all our audio and video gear, give it the same face plate, put it in a rack, and call it something like 'Ultima'."

"Yeah, even if we don't sell many of the systems they'll make great in-store displays," interrupts the sales manager. "We can show off our entire audio/video line in a single rack. The dealers will love it. But will it work?"

"Why not?," quips the VP of engineering. "We're just talking about packaging. Before we go ahead we should at least magnetically shield the speakers so they don't interfere with the TV's picture. And maybe we can create a single remote control that'll work all the components."

"How about calling it Systemia?" the sales manager exclaims, as another audio/video product is born: the super-system.

Events work this way in consumer electronics today. However, there's no reason to be cynical. Behind the sales and marketing savvy that powers audio/video product launches, unforeseen benefits often emerge.

The super-system is based largely on the success of one-brand audio rack systems that emphasize balanced performance, a unified appearance, and attractive prices. The already blurry distinction between audio and video—what with MTS stereo decoders, Hi-Fi VCRs, and combined LV/CD players—has further accelerated the trend. Since consumers are already stacking their gear in great piles of A/V electronica, why not give

ILLUSTRATION BY JOSIE YEE

SUPER SYSTEMS



Marantz AVDX500CD System

them something nice to look at in addition to equipment that is optimized to work best together?

For audio/video neophytes and videophiles planning to overhaul current gear, super-systems provide several ad-

vantages over purchasing each component separately. The first, and most obvious, is that there is only one company to deal with should anything break down. Secondly, the components in super-systems are matched to meet all power and impedance requirements. This eliminates worries about blown speakers and fused circuits.

One-brand systems also ease many of the headaches posed by complex wiring assignments. Finally, there is the esthetic benefit of having a consistent frontplate design and an attractive piece of furniture in which to store everything.

ALL FOR ONE

The components of different super-systems vary widely among manufacturers. Basic systems include a TV, an integrated amplifier, a turntable, a cassette deck, and speakers. Deluxe setups may add a CD player, a Hi-Fi VCR or videodisc player, a projection TV, and a unified wireless remote control that provides easy access to all the components.

The ability to control a mountain of equipment with a single remote unit is the major attraction of super-systems, since consumers have grown weary of amassing

22 SUPER SYSTEMS AT A GLANCE

Brand, Model, Price	Number of Components	Monitors	Video	Audio	Furniture	Special Notes
AKAI HTR-445WR \$2,790.	6	26" CRT	optional VHS Hi-Fi, 4 heads, 8/28*	100 w/ch., AM/FM, MTS, EQ, 3-way spkrs.**	Separate A/V cabinets w/glass doors, casters.	CD, dual cassette, AM Stereo, surround sound.
AKAI HT-335 \$2,700.	6	26" CRT	optional VHS Hi-Fi, 4 heads, 8/28	80 w/ch., AM/FM, MTS, EQ, 3-way spkrs.	Separate A/V cabinets w/glass doors, casters.	CD, dual cassette, AM Stereo, surround sound.
FISHER Videotech MK-20 \$6,000.	10	27" CRT	VHS-HQ, Hi-Fi, 4 heads, 8/1 yr.	150 w/ch., AM/FM, MTS, EQ, 3-way spkrs.	Pre-assembled A/V cabinet w/storage compartments.	Unified remote, CD, dual cassette.
FISHER Videotech MK-30 \$7,000.	10	40" proj.	VHS-HQ, Hi-Fi, 4 heads, 8/1 yr.	150 w/ch., AM/FM, MTS, EQ, 3-way spkrs.	Audio cabinet matches proj. TV and speakers.	Unified remote, CD, dual cassette.
GENERAL ELECTRIC 11-5210 \$999.99	7	20" CRT	optional VHS HQ, Hi-Fi, 4/14	30 w/ch., AM/FM, MTS, EQ, 2-way spkrs.	Separate audio and video racks.	Dual cassette, prog. clock/timer, opt. CD.
GENERAL ELECTRIC 11-5220 \$1,149.99	7	25" CRT	optional VHS HQ, Hi-Fi, 4/14	30 w/ch., AM/FM, MTS, EQ, 2-way spkrs.	Separate audio and video racks.	Dual cassette, prog. clock/timer, opt. CD.
HITACHI TVH-2711 \$NA.	8	22" CRT	VHS Hi-Fi, 5 heads, 8/1yr.	50 x 2 w/ch., AM/FM, EQ, 3-way spkrs.	System center available in oak vinyl or black finish.	Dual cassette.
JVC XM910AV \$6,000.	11	20" CRT	VHS Hi-Fi, 4 heads, 8/14	80 w/ch., AM/FM, MTS, EQ, 3-way spkrs.	Separate A/V racks.	CD, dual cassette, video graphics synthesizer.
MARANTZ AVDX500CD \$3,999.95	9	25" CRT	VHS-HQ, Hi-Fi, 4 heads, 8/21	100 w/ch., AM/FM, MTS, EQ, 3-way spkrs.	Console-style cabinet in woodgrain vinyl finish.	Unified remote, CD, cassette.
MITSUBISHI AV-2600 \$3,200.	8	26" CRT	VHS-HQ, Hi-Fi, 4 heads, 8/14	50 w/ch., AM/FM, 3-way spkrs.	Oak veneer finish cabinet.	Unified remote, dual cassette.
NEC Renaissance \$NA	6	25" CRT	VHS Hi-Fi, 4 heads, 8/21	60 w/ch., AM/FM, MTS, 4-way spkrs.	Hand-rubbed oak veneer double A/V cabinet.	CD, no turntable.

^{*}No. of events/No. of days

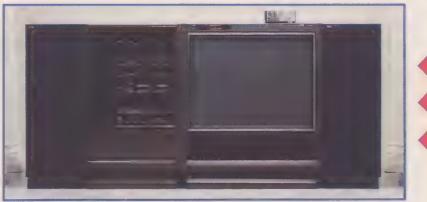
^{**}w/ch-watts/channel, EQ-graphic equalizer

SUPER SYSTEMS

individual remotes for each piece of A/V hardware they buy.

Unified remote controls require a central "brain" to process commands to the appropriate equipment. Various components are used to house this controller. For example, in the RCA Dimensia system (the first of the super-systems), the control processor is built into the monitor/receiver, which provides an on-screen readout of the settings for the component. However, Pioneer's Foresight Pro-1A uses its SA-V70 integrated amplifier to handle all processing chores via a docking remote control unit that actually becomes part of the amp when not in use.

Sony has opted for a completely different approach to remote operation with its new AV-XBR. It comes equipped with a main remote control device that operates the audio switching and transport functions and docks with another remote control that works the system's video components.



Sanyo Series 5000 System

THE BIG PICTURE

While a super-system can certainly provide everything you could possibly need in a home entertainment center, the question remains: Is a one-brand system more economical than building from scratch?

Super-systems are often sold *en masse* at a super-discounted price, though their suggested prices are usually a compilation of the list prices of the various components. When you remember that most au-

continued on page 119

Brand, Model, Price	Number of Components	Monitors	Video	Audio	Furniture	Special Notes
PIONEER AV-950R \$3,999.95	9	26" CRT	optional VHS Hi-Fi VCR	100 w/ch., AM/FM, 4-way spkrs., EQ, simul. stereo.	Simulated woodgrain A/V cabinet.	Unified remote, CD, dual cassette.
PIONEER Foresight Pro-1A \$7,300.	6	40" proj.	LV/CD player; optional VHS or Beta Hi-Fi VCR	50 w/ch., AM/FM, 3-way spkrs., MTS, surround	Separate simulated woodgrain A/V cabinets.	Unified remote, dual cassette.
QUASAR PAV5600 \$1899.95	5	26" CRT	many optional VCRs	50 w/ch., AM/FM, MTS, 3-way spkrs.	Wood veneer A/V cabinet w/glass doors.	Unified remote, dual cassette (housed in receiver).
RCA Dimensia \$6,860.	10	40" proj.	convertible VHS Hi-Fi, 5 heads, 8/1 yr.	100 w/ch., AM/FM, MTS, EQ, 3-way + rear spkrs.	Optional ebony or oak cabinet by O'Sullivan.	Unified remote, CD, dual cassette.
RCA Dimensia \$4,790.	ā	26" CRT	VHS Hi-Fi, 5 heads, 8/1 yr.	50 w/ch., AM/FM, MTS, 3-way + rear spkrs.	Optional ebony or oak cabinet by O'Sullivan.	Unified remote, CD, dual cassette.
SANSUI "Leader" \$NA.	9	26" CRT	optional VHS Hi-Fi	100 w/ch., AM/FM, MTS, 3-way spkrs.	Walnut finish A/V cabinet w/matching speakers.	Unified remote, CD, dual cassette.
Series 5000 under \$5,000.	10	40" proj.	SuperBeta Hi-Fi, 2 heads, 8/14	100 w/ch., AM/FM, MTS, EQ, 3-way spkrs.	Hickory finsh system cabinet w/glass door.	Unified remote, CD, dual cassette.
SONY AV-XBR \$3,800.	9	25" CRT	SuperBeta Hi-Fi, 3 heads, 6/7	100 w/ch., AM/FM, MTS, EQ, 3-way spkrs.	Black cabinet, video pedestal.	Unified remote, optiona CD, dual cassette.
SONY Access 301 \$NA.	8	27" CRT	optional SuperBeta Hi-Fi, 6/7	55 w/ch., AM/FM, MTS, 3-way + rear spkrs.	Matching high-tech black A/V racks, spkr. stands.	Unified remote, CD, cassette.
TECHNICS AV-300 \$3,500.	10	26" CRT	VHS Hi-Fi, 4 heads, 4/14	110 w/ch., AM/FM, MTS, 3-way spkrs., surround.	Simulated oak A/V rack w/matching spkr. stands.	Unified remote, CD, dual cassette.
TECHNICS AV-200 \$3,000.	9	26" CRT	VHS Hi-Fi, 4 heads, 4/14	110 w/ch., AM/FM, MTS, 3-way spkrs.	Walnut veneer A/V rack.	Unified remote, CD, dual cassette.

Note: All systems include turntable unless noted. Number of Components includes unified remote; speaker sets count as single components.

Et Tu, Shakespeare?

The Bard's Greatest Hits on Tape and Disc

BY M. GEORGE STEVENSON

Given the choice of spending yet another evening with Indiana Jones or taking a chance on Shakespeare, I'm sure most folks would shout "bring on the Temple of Doom!" Well, they don't know what they're missing. Shakespearean video isn't just reading hard-to-fathom stuff with lots of old-fashioned words—it's seeing the most popular dramatist of all time, seeing his people in their element, acting from real passions, behaving like real people.

The beauty of watching Shakespeare on tape and disc is that there's so much diversity. The best of the Bard's tragedies, comedies, and histories have made the transition to tape in more versions than you could hope to see in a season of playgoing. While some record live performances, many were conceived as movies with all the world for their stage. Either way, they feature some of our finest actors and directors.

Even better, Shakespeare presents a panoply of recognizable characters. They dazzle, befuddle, and delight, just like performers in contemporary movies. Henry V can convince you that battling Frenchmen is the best thing a person can do in life, just as Hamlet will convince you all wars are futile. Falstaff makes a great case for drinking and carousing, and Rosalind an equally good one for modesty and moderation.

Better still, as in life, their passions determine what happens to them. Mark Antony in both *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* is a party animal, Richard II is a wimp, and Hamlet can't decide what to do. In each case, their traits help explain how they get into so much trouble.

Playgoers in Shakespeare's time were very much like videophiles. They expected to be presented with an entire cosmos, familiar and unfamiliar, and a drama that touched on their own lives. Political, moral, legal, and romantic problems were all fair game. They demanded them all, plus a little spectacle, on the same stage, often in the same play. Shakespeare delivered. He gave them all the blood and thunder of English Renaissance drama and something bigger besides—a universe filled with clashing ideas.

That's why he still has so much to offer on video. Not only can the astute videophile sample the Bard, but the many ways his plays can work, for there are as many ways to do Shakespeare as there are directors with the chutzpah to try. So fasten your seatbelts for a look at how different directors have brought the Bard to video, in terms of authenticity, Shakespearean traditions, and new interpretations.

The best place to start is *Macbeth*, a popular favorite that's been filmed every which way but up. Famous as a pageant of

ILLUSTRATION BY JEFF SEAVER





Shakespearean videos deliver blood and thunder in a universe filled with clashing ideas.



Laurence Olivier as Hamlet (left) and Orson Welles as Macbeth (right)

of one man's rise and undoing, *Macbeth* can be a political thriller, a study in perverse sexuality, a tale of the twilight of the gods, or all of the above. In watching *Macbeth* on tape pay attention to the relationship between Lady Macbeth and Macbeth, and to the witches. For thereby hangs the tale.

Kultur's *Macbeth*, starring Jeremy Brett and Piper Laurie as the First Couple of Murder, is an authentic version with the most complete text. The subplots and comic scenes fit with surprising ease into the larger sweep of the production. Showing the whole world it was meant to represent makes it more political; Macbeth has to wile his way into the kingdom as much as murder his way.

The single-set stage makes the roles, rather than the actors, the focus of concentration. Luckily, Brett's Peter O'Toolish Macbeth and Laurie's almost sluttish Lady Macbeth are worth concentrating on. They are so obviously hot for each other that Lady Macbeth becomes more than just a ruthless monster. Her ambition spurs him on when his wanes, and her guilt over killing the King makes her madness more believable.

Verdi loved making operas from Shake-speare's plays because they are already operatic. This quality emerges best in a traditional version from Video Yester-year—its *Hallmark Hall of Fame* video starring Maurice Evans and Dame Judith Anderson. In this straightforward staging, Anderson's Lady Macbeth is the real monster. Her speeches and delivery are

astoundingly creepy. All the characters do what we expect, so the pleasure comes almost entirely from watching the actors; traditional versions guarantee respectful readings of the "greatest hits" speeches. Such respect is foreign to the more in-

Such respect is foreign to the more interpretive Republic Video *Macbeth*. Director Orson Welles, who also played Macbeth, cares less about morality and politics. His Macbeth acts out his fate while trying to escape from it. Like Jeannette Nolan's Lady M, he lapses into madness, lashing out at everything and everybody.

The witches' scenes have always been the most difficult to get right. How they are presented determines how Macbeth is played. Is he ruthless and wily because he wants to be king or does the knowledge (through the witches) that he will be king make him that way?

In Kultur's authentic version, the witches dance like Fates through the set, even when the text doesn't have them there, to remind you that Macbeth has to follow his destiny. In Hallmark's traditional staging, the witches are less important. Evans' Macbeth is a tragic hero flawed by ambition. The witches seem to be there mostly to light his ambition so that Lady Macbeth can bully him to get ahead.

Welles concentrates on the historical roots of the tragedy, and puts Macbeth in Druidic Scotland. The witches are crucial.

PHOTOS: MOVIE STILL ARCHIVES



Taylor and Burton in 'The Taming of the Shrew'

Once Welles as Macbeth sees them making a voodoo doll of him, he is spooked. Macbeth and his wife are unregenerate pagans. They know that when fate calls, it is unalterable.

Which is best? That's up to you, because there's enough diversity to suit almost anyone's taste.

THE PUREBRED BARD

Fans who like their Shakespeare undiluted will want to check out the Kultur Bard Productions. Kultur/Bard's idea is that the play is the text, so as much of the text as possible is used. This ensures that the characters will be presented in all their variety and inconsistency, letting viewers struggle with them and concentrate on the well-known characters. What they are, more than the swordfights or the pageantry, is what's interesting: Othello's wobbly social position, Bolingbroke's ambition and loyalty in Richard II, Cleopatra's romanticism in Antony and Cleopatra, and Prospero's exile in The Tempest make them and change them—which is the point.

Kultur's unusual casting, mainly TV and minor movie stars, also works well. David Birney, from Bridget Loves Bernie, is ideally ineffectual as Richard II; Ron Moody, Fagin in Oliver!, is a terrific lago in Othello; Ron Palillo, Horshack in Welcome Back, Kotter, makes a very funny Trinculo in The Tempest; and Tony Geary of General Hospital is exactly young and overly serious enough to be perfect as Octavius Caesar in Antony and Cleopatra.





Olivier with Maggie Smith in 'Othello'

If some of the supporting cast is too California, the strength of the leads more than balances it. Kultur/Bard plans to do all the plays this way and it's as close as you will come to seeing the totality of world Shakespeare had in mind.

Their only drawback is length. Kultur/Bard's *Tempest* is two hours, *Macbeth* two and a half, and the rest around three. But if you can enjoy the leisurely unfolding of plot, and the careful delineation of character and incident Shakespeare excelled in, these are the Shakespeare videos for you.

HAMS ON WRY

The best-known Shakespeare film of our time is Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet*, an exemplary traditional adaptation. It isn't anywhere near the whole play and cuts lots of the Mercutio role, but it succeeds due to the chemistry of the actors and the clarity with which the family battle is portrayed. The funny parts are funny, the ending truly sad. A good movie, pure and simple.

So is Laurence Olivier's *Richard III* (Embassy). Lord Larry as the hunch-backed schemer lusting for the throne is so evil and nasty it boggles the mind, as do his strange eighteenth century additions to the dialogue. Still, when you get to "A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse!" at the end, you've seen one helluva drama. Similarly, the battle of wills between the Orlando/Rosilind side and the Duke/Oliver side

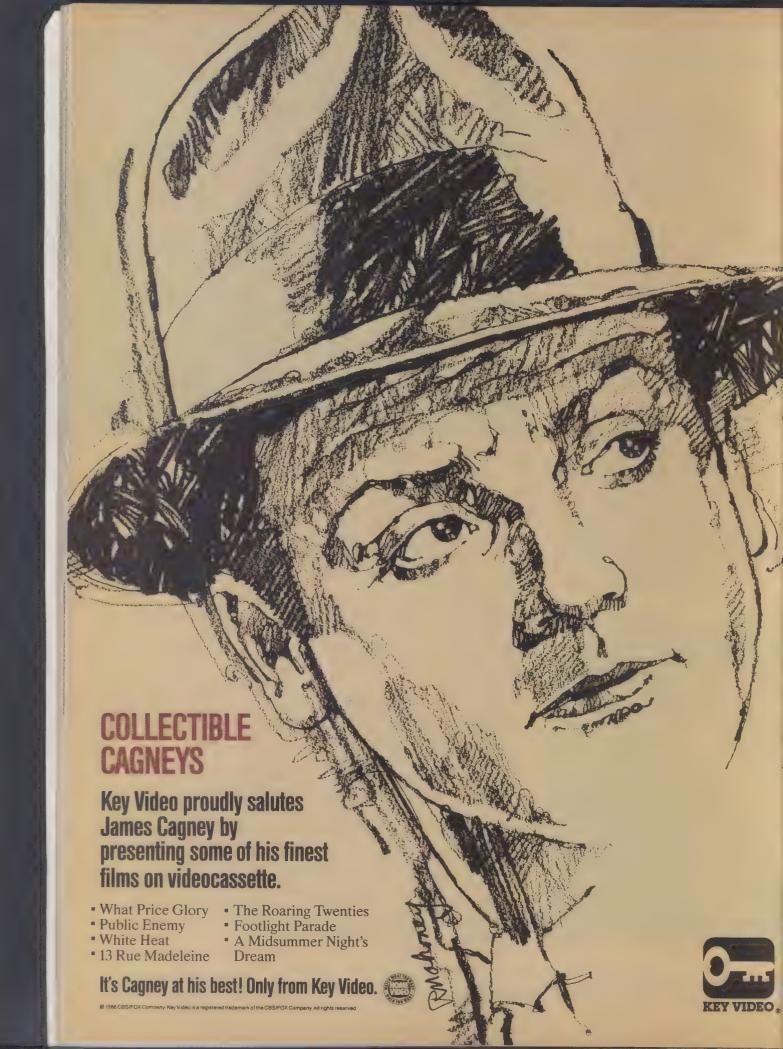
in his *As You Like It* (Cable and Prism) works well as a meditation on rigidly held views. Not the funniest or most complete version of this comedy, but a fine job nonetheless. Even the silent *Othello* (Video Yesteryear) is fun though it's hammy and simplistic.

But traditional productions either work well or not at all. Bringing out the plot at the expense of everything else loses some of the most important elements in a play. Republic's *Julius Caesar*, despite the allstar cast, falls on its face because Jason Robards is wrong as Brutus and can't equal Charlton Heston's Mark Antony.

Zeffirelli's *Taming of the Shrew* fails because he refuses to let Liz and Dick—perfect choices for the quarreling lovers—do the play as written. Forcing the lowest comedy on Shakespeare's funniest play turns it into a bad vaudeville act.

If one is going to go to the trouble of watching this stuff, why not the best? The 1953 MGM *Julius Caesar*, for example, with Marlon Brando as Antony and James Mason as Brutus, is much stronger and has more lasting star power. The same is true of the British *Taming of the Shrew*, or the Laurence Harvey *Romeo and Juliet*. There have been enough traditional-style films and videos done over the years—Hallmark Hall of Fame did several for TV in the 1950s—that the selection should be larger.

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NEWS AND VIEWS

BY MARK FLEISCHMANN

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SIMMONS' GRASP MATCHES HIS REACH

R eagan didn't build exercise studios for the disabled—so I'm gonna do it." Richard Simmons—fitness guru, philanthropist, and his own best PR man—is talking about the Reach Foundation, beneficiary of the revenue from a September Karl/Lorimar release called *Reach for Fitness*.

"The Reach Foundation is a nonprofit organization that I began two years ago. We go inside hospitals, take 1000 or 1500 square feet, and create an adapted exercise studio for the physically challenged" (Simmonspeak for the handicapped, whom he also calls "handicapable").

How do the physically challenged exercise? As best they can, and Simmons stresses that they can. His tape—two years in the making—shows various people in wheelchairs, in braces, or situated on the floor doing exercises devised from responses to a questionnaire sent to hospitals and doctors. "Everybody rooted for them," says Simmons, "because these were people who never worked in front of a camera before—none of them, the children or the adults. It was happy, it was a party, and it was very emotional.

"We've been offered cable but I want to sell it on cassette first. I want people to buy it. It's only \$14.95. That donation will help the physically challenged for the rest of their lives. I want it to go to number one on the charts." And he wants both the able-bodied and the handicapped to see "how hard these physically challenged people work out."

Reach for Fitness is the effervescent Simmons' fourth assault on the video world. His previous titles are Every Day with Richard Simmons, The Stomach Formula, and Get Started, for those overweight and out of shape. His next effort will be Richard and the Silver Foxes—"silver citizens" is his catchphrase for more mature folks—and will

feature the moms and dads of Sylvester Stallone, Dustin Hoffman, Cher, Al Pacino, Michael Jackson and Simmons himself.

There's no stopping this guy. His heart is as big as his address book.



MACRO TO DUBBERS: DROP DEAD

ne of the most tempting (and blatantly illegal) uses of a videocassette recorder may soon pass into video history. A major push is now on to standardize a relatively new copy-protect system, Macrovision, to foil video dubbing of copyrighted programs. First tested commercially on *The Cotton Club* (Embassy), the system has been pronounced technological and practical success.

It is gaining influential backers.

Bell & Howell—now known as Bell & Howell/Columbia Paramount Video Services—may not be a familiar name to the street-level consumer, but as the biggest tape duplicator in the country it has a lot of weight to throw around. BHCP has installed necessary circuitry in its manufacturing operations to make the Macrovision option available to its partner companies (RCA/Columbia and Paramount) and other client labels.

Among the labels that have announced

major involvement in the copy-protect system are MCA, which will use Macrovision for all future releases, and CBS/Fox, which will use it for selected releases. MCA has already encoded more than 375,000 cassettes to stop copying and is actively helping to fine-tune the system. CBS/Fox was the first major label to announce it would use Macrovision; Consumer Products president Len White calls it "a moral obligation" of labels to producers.

Unlike a "copyguard" system unsuccessfully tried several years back, Macrovision does not harm the playback performance of older VCRs or TVs playing legitimate copies, claims Gary Grizdala, chief executive officer of Macrovision. Try playing a dub, though, and you'll likely encounter such symptoms as picture breakup, rolling, tearing, color loss, color noise, unwanted lines, darkening, contortions, or rapid brightness variations. Macrovision attacks the automatic gain control (AGC) in a recording VCR to produce these effects. Two alternative modes are available: "static,' which attacks the AGC for 45 seconds at a time, and "pulsation," which pops in and out every few seconds. Duplicators install the circuitry between master and slave VCRs; Macrovision gets a royalty for each tape duped with the system. Grizdala estimates that "80 to 90 percent of the duplication capacity in the United States" is now Macrovision-equipped.

One interesting sidelight: the system has been perfected for VHS and 8mm but not for most Beta equipment. Given Beta's shrinking slice of the pie, this poses little threat to Macrovision's ultimate acceptance. But Grizdala says his company is working on a new system—not a Macrovision variation—for Beta. "We're not ready to release it yet," he says. "It's still got some playability problems." The problem is that Beta's auto gain control is the same for recording and playback, so anything that interferes with recording also interferes with playback.

What about LaserVision? Grizdala



Dubbing 'Cotton Club' is a pointless effort.



says Macrovision and MCA are in the process of working playback bugs out of the system. Copy protection for laser will be officially available "relatively shortly." Macrovision even has a variation for CED, lest any problem with the format that's deader than Beta keep programming execs awake nights.

BETA'S LIVING DEATH: A REGRESS REPORT

ike Master Blaster in Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome, Beta and VHS are locked in a symbiotic union disguised as economic combat. VHS is Blaster, the intimidating hulk who enforces order; Beta is Master, the little squirt who rides the big guy's shoulders telling him what to do. VHS wouldn't be half as sophisticated if Sony's research labs weren't constantly turning up new ideas to swipe: Beta wouldn't be as creative if the dominance of VHS didn't eternally rankle Sony's pride. VHS-only partisans awaiting Beta's death should stop to consider that when Beta does vanish, VHS's goose will be cooked, too.

Beta's vital signs continue to fade on both the hardware (equipment) and software (programming) fronts. A recent study sponsored by the Electronic Industries Association, a hardware trade group, found Beta supporters among new VCR buyers down to nine percent. Yet Allan Schlosser, EIA's staff VP for communications, isn't ready to call Beta a dead issue in light of 8mm's future as the second, not third, format."There certainly are more Beta prerecorded movies than 8mm prerecorded movies. That will continue for the next four to five years. Beta is declining in its share, but it's not dead."

Among Beta's few remaining programming power bases is the Video Shack chain in New York. "Your Beta people are generally older people," says Shack exec Marcia Kesselman. "Beta is old money, people who bought Beta machines in the late '70s. They aren't interested in wrestling tapes," she adds, referring to the titles raking in cash for her company's Coliseum label, "but they sure are interested in *Casablanca*." As for 8mm, "I don't know that we would replace Beta with 8mm." But then again, "I don't know that we wouldn't."

Though most major labels continue to release identical Beta and VHS titles side by side, getting one out of a non-Beta retailer can be tough. According to one industry estimate, more than 60 percent of video stores refuse to special-order Beta tapes for customers who request them. Beta is no longer a viable option for the single-machine owner who wants to build a library or watch a wide selection of rental tapes.

Knowing most of this and suspecting the rest didn't prevent me from trading actual U.S. currency for a SuperBeta last December after years of using Beta loaners. I usually use my VHS machine for anything new and prerecorded, but for all other applications I prefer the sharper picture of SuperBeta and the operational pleasures of a Sony. I have two-thirds of Alfred Hitchcock's three-dozen-odd titles on Beta and have no intention of dumping the majority of my collection.

I'm in no rush to get 8mm. Not even Sony can make an 8mm deck that looks or sounds as good as SuperBeta. Master and Blaster sit atop one another on a shelf I just built for them and I use them both. When they march off to the happy hunting ground of technological history, they'll march together.

NEW WORLD HITS THE STREET

very so often a familiar video company changes direction with a new release. MPI first attracted serious attention with its *Prisoner* and Emile de Antonio series; Prism improved its image with *Sakharov*. New World, a label heavily identified with B movies, is taking the same kind of momentous step with the release of *Streetwise* on its newly acquired Learning Corporation of America (LCA) label.

This documentary on runaway kids comes to video only months after its general theatrical release, and at a time when interest in child-related social problems is at an all-time high. Critic Roger Ebert calls it "the most heart-breaking and dramatic film I've seen." The program details the lives of nine runaways between ages 13 and 19 in Seattle, surviving on the streets via prostitution, panhandling, and "dumpster diving."

Each year, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, between 1.3 and 1.5 million kids flee or are forced from their homes because of sexual or physical abuse or other long-term family problems. New World/LCA says "a portion" of its revenue from the

\$59.95 cassette will go to the National Fund for Runaway Children. If you'd like to help, send a tax-deductible donation to the Fund at Box 8283, Washington, D.C. 20024.

SCANLINES

The lack of 8mm films belies hefty consumer interest in the format. A study of 1000 VCR owners and prospective owners by the Fairfield Group, a research organization, reports 55 percent would buy 8mm. However, the assumptions posited by the study—major titles under \$20, better picture and audio quality—are unrealistic.

Remember LaserVision—the format that really *does* provide better video and audio? The good word from Pioneer is that it will revive the Pioneer Video Imports label. Attention motorheads: among new PVI releases will be *Motor Fantasy*, the first digital CAV release and a treat for car buffs.

Six new Bergman—Ingmar, that is—releases will be out at the end of July from Embassy. *Virgin Spring* and *The Magician* are on the bill.

Jazz in America first got video exposure on the Sony label. Now the acclaimed broadcast series has moved to

Embassy. New \$19.95 installments will feature Max Roach and Dizzy Gillespie, both with Gerry Mulligan.

Sesame Street star Alaina Reed hosts *Learning Can Be Fun* on the Playhouse label. The program was, however, made for home video. Also look for the label to lure *Mister Rogers* onto tape from his PBS idyl.

The Singles Life is Prism's theme for a volley of releases on life in the nonmarital fray. Titles will include the madefor-broadcast drama *Single Bars*, *Single Women*, and the comedy *How to Seduce a Woman*

Media probably didn't intend its release of *Blood Wedding* as a thematic climax to the above. The Carlos Saura flick, based on a Gabriel Garcia Lorca story, is full of colorful flamenco dance. It'll be out this month with the re-release of Saura's *Carmen*. "We're concentrating our efforts on them," says Jim Gullo of Media.

Chet Atkins turns teacher in *Get Started on Guitar*. The country legend uses splitscreen closeups to strut his stuff, and a 112-page guidebook comes with the \$69.95 program. Add \$3 for postage and it's yours from The Atkins Video Society, 629 American Road, Nashville, Tenn. 37209.

TOPTENTRAGRAMIT

CASSETTE SALES

- 1. Jane Fonda's New Workout (1).* 1985. 90 min. \$39.95. Karl.
- **2.** The Sound of Music (4). 1965. Julie Andrews. 174m. (G) \$29.98. CBS/Fox.
- **3. Casablanca** (6). B&W. 1942. Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman. 102m. \$29.98. CBS/Fox.
- 4. Return of the Jedi (2). 1983. Mark Hamill, Carrie Fisher, Harrison Ford. 132m. (PG) \$79.95. CBS/Fox.
- **5. Cocoon** (-). 1985. Steve Guttenberg, Don Ameche. 117m. (PG-13) \$79.98. CBS/Fox.
- **6. Witness** (3). 1985. Harrison Ford, Kelly McGillis, 113m. (R) \$79.95. Paramount.
- 7. Jane Fonda's Workout (5). 1982. 90m. \$59.95. Karl.

- **8.** The King and I (-). 1956. Yul Brynner, 133m. \$29.98. CBS/Fox.
- **9. Commando** (7). 1985. Arnold Schwarzenegger. 90m. (R) \$79.98. CBS/Fox.
- 10. Playboy Video Centerfold (-), 1985, 20m. \$9.95. Karl.

VIDEODISC SALES

- 1. Return of the Jedi (1). As above, "Cassette Sales." LV \$34.98. CED \$29.98. CBS/Fox.
- **2. Silverado** (2). 1985. Kevin Kline. 132m. (PG-13) LV, CED \$29.95. RCA/Columbia.
- **3. Commando** (-). As above, "Cassette Sales." LV \$34.98. CED \$29.98. CBS/Fox.
- **4. Witness** (-). As above, "Cassette Sales." LV, CED \$29.95. Paramount.
- 5. Pee-Wee's Big Adventure

- (5). 1985. Pee-Wee Herman. 92m. (PG) LV \$34.98. Warner.
- 6. Rambo: First Blood Part II
 (7). As above, "Cassette
 Sales." CED \$29.95. RCA.
- 7. *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (-). 1985. William Hurt, Raul Julia. 119m. (R) LV \$34.95. CED \$24.95. Charter.
- 8. Weird Science (4). 1985. 94m. (PG-13) LV \$34.98. MCA.
- **9. The Goonies** (-). 1985. 111m. (PG) LV \$34.98. Warner.
- **10.** Fright Night (-). 1985. 106m. (R) LV, CED \$29.95. RCA/Columbia.

CASSETTE RENTALS

- 1. Witness (1). As above, "Cassette Sales."
- **2. Cocoon** (-). As above, "Cassette Sales."

- 3. Commando (4). As above, "Cassette Sales."
- **4. Invasion U.S.A.** (-), 1985. Chuck Norris. 108m. (R) \$79.95. MGM/UA.
- 5. Kiss of the Spider Woman (6). As above, "Disc Sales." \$79.95. Charter.
- 6. Agnes of God (-). 1985. Anne Bancroft, Meg Tilly, Jane Fonda. 99m. (PG-13) \$79.95. RCA/Columbia.
- 7. Return of the Jedi (2). As above, "Cassette Sales."
- 8. Sweet Dreams (-). 1985. Jes sica Lange, Ed Harris. 115m. (R) \$79.95. Thorn.
- **9. Silverado** (3). As above, "Disc Sales." \$79.95. RCA/Columbia.
- 10. The Goonies (5). As above, "Disc Sales." \$79.95. Warner.

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FILMS PRODUCED FOR THEATERS



The Jewel of the Nile

THE JEWEL OF THE NILE

1985. Michael Douglas, Kathleen Turner, Danny DeVito; dir. Lewis Teague. 106m. (PG-13) Hi St D cc \$79.98. CBS/Fox. Image: excel.

(To be read aloud in an imitation of Andy Rooney's voice.)

Don't you just hate it when the sequel isn't as good as the original? Take *Romancing the Stone*, for example, an adventure movie about the search for a big jewel. They made a sequel and called it *The Jewel of the Nile* to cash in on the precious gem fanciers who went to see the first movie, I guess. But there aren't really any big stones in it and the Nile doesn't make an appearance, either. Truth-in-titling lawyers might be interested in following that up, but let's you and me move on.

Michael Douglas, if you remember, plays adventurer Jack Colton, DeVito a hard-boiled guy from Queens, and Turner popular romance novelist named Joan Wilder. The new movie opens with a scene from one of her novels but returns to reality when she can't think of an ending. They thought of an ending to this

picture, but you almost wish they hadn't—first you have to wade through Jack and Joan's problems with their relationship (I should have their problems), and the plot is so complicated that De-Vito's character, my favorite, now has only a minor role.

You see, this picture is about how Joan gets caught up with a guy (Spiros Focas as Omar) trying to take over a fictional Middle Eastern country by pretending to have the powers of the Jewel of the Nile—a holy man (played by Avner Eisenberg), not a precious stone, romanceable or otherwise. Omar is an obvious bad guy, and though Joan is no dope, that fact eludes her. The Middle Eastern good guys are played by the Flying Karamazov Brothers, a comedy acrobat troupe, so they juggle and jump around all the time. This confused me. I like my good guys to be on the high moral ground, like Gary Cooper in High Noon, not the high wire.

One thing I did like about this tape was the sound. I have one of those big, expensive VCRs with stereo I play through my hi-fi. I have my speakers on either side of my living room and the stereo separation was great—I caught myself looking around every time a bomb or

something would go off, like when I was in combat in WWII.

But that's about it. The big problem with sequels, I guess, is that no matter how good or enjoyable the movie might be, it just *isn't* the original movie and there's nothing you can do about it. From now on it's old *60 Minutes* tapes for me.

-M. George Stevenson

STRANGER THAN PARADISE

1985. B&W. John Lurie, Richard Edson, * Eszter Balint; wr./dir. Jim Jarmusch. 90m. (R) Hi cc \$79.98. Key. Image; excel.

There must be some weird magnetism in the Ohio atmosphere that enabled Akron-bred Jim Jarmusch to make a film as confident, fresh, yet viscerally comforting as Stranger Than Paradise. Wondrously anti-American in its cinematic sensibility, if not its politics, with a plot that doesn't move so much as melt, STP employs mere 60-odd shots punctuated by blackouts. Jarmusch gives a good-natured backhand to the notion of action being obligatory as he observes the languid progress of his three main characters. Willie and Eddie (portrayed by New York musicians Lurie and Edson) are urban grifters so gracefully unmotivated that when Willie's teenage cousin makes an unwelcome appearance on her way from Hungary to Cleveland, the effect is that of a mouse sucked into a vacuum. As Eva, Eszter Balint enters with an Eastern bloc rigidity that gives the film perfect posture.

The first of three sections, "The New World" was originally produced as a short which Jarmusch used to secure funding for the balance of the feature. This sequence sets the tone. Jarmusch allows the audience to discover the characters in the real-time sense that they discover each other. The only false note is the labored vehemence with which Willie reacts to his Old World heritage.

The latter sections perpetuate the cool honesty. A "One Year Later" voyage to icy Cleveland reunites Willie and Eddie with Eva; "Paradise" is an anti-an-

For key to headings see "Legend" on first page of "Directory."

ti-climax in Florida where the trio forms a triangle whose sides never touch.

The film's ultimate beauty is its passive power: Lurie and Edson's Mt. Rushmore facial features; Eva's stoic realizzation that the one quality Willie has retained through a generation is dullness; Jarmusch's essential grasp on half a century's art cinema. Indeed, these characters could be rooted exclusively in a cellulloid base—sporting their misshapen fedoras, Willie and Eddie wander about Cleveland like aliens from the planet Cinematheque. Jarmusch has even eliminated the pitfalls of a low budget by using B&W. Unlike other phantoms of the art houses (i.e. Mazursky and DePalma), Jarmusch's intellect isn't slathered on top of his work; rather, it emanates from within. Stranger Than Paradise is not the work of an imitator or cosmetician, but simply that of a man with impeccable

(Students of cinema who want to see the film Jarmusch had to get out of his system can now procure his debut feature, *Permanent Vacation*, a bloated NYU Film School product re-released with Sara Driver's *You Are Not I*, on which Jarmusch served as cinematographer. Both are available through New Video Independents, 276 Third Ave. New York, N.Y., 10010.)

-John Walker



Streetwise

STREETWISE

1985. Dir. Martin Bell. Pr. Cheryl McCall. 92m. Hi \$59.95. New World. Image: good.

A fundamental rule of journalism is that you need not bludgeon people with a good story. It'll tell itself. *Life* reporter Cheryl McCall didn't fully grasp this tenet in 1982 when she wrote a feature on Seattle's runaway kids. Her tritely-titled "Streets of the Lost" was a predictable, numbing bundle of statistics. But photographer Mary Ellen Mark brought the story back alive, in portraits that captured the humanity of a half-dozen teenagers living incredible lives without parental supervision.

When they returned to Seattle with wildlife filmmaker Martin Bell, Mark's sensibility prevailed. *Streetwise* follows nine runaways who congregate on a small downtown strip, and tells their stories through their actions, their patterns of speech, their candid moments of innocence and vulnerability. It doesn't tell you what horrible lives runaways face; it tells you who the runaways are. The mixture of Huckleberry Finn and urban tragedy is juxtaposed without contradiction.

*Streetwise presents its kids as kids. We see Rat, a 17-year-old, roller-skating through the halls of the abandoned hotel in which he lives, and ordering a pineapple pizza which he will later scavenge



Streetwise

from the garbage. We see his 14-yearold girlfriend, Tiny, a prostitute who wants kids of her own, but not, she says, by one of her "dates."

Streetwise is grimly, ironically funny in spots. The weather is warm and the kids seem resourceful enough to find food and shelter. There's certain equilibrium to their off-kilter lives. Then DeWayne, 16, commits suicide and we sense the crushing stress on these children with no psychological or social support systems.

What emerges is pattern of astonishing parental ineptitude and inadequacy. Tiny's mother is too mired in her own alcoholism to care for her daughter. When 13-year-old Shellie confronts her mother about her father repeatedly raping her as child, the mother says, defensively, "He stopped, didn't he?" De-Wayne visits his arsonist father in prison; the father, lighting a cigarette, warns his son about smoking. He doesn't know whether to check DeWayne's fingers for nail-biting or his arms for needle marks. At the funeral, the camera catches a Coke can resting on the coffin.

Streetwise has a few unsettling problems. One off-camera comment that sounds cut-together raises questions about overall veracity. Also, Cheryl McCall told me the kids wouldn't discuss their drug use or male prostitution on camera, so a significant aspect of their brutalization is absent from the film. According to Rat, the girls become prostitutes to avoid the degradation of eating out of dumpsters and crashing in abandoned buildings, but we see little of how they live. The film suggests survival patterns that don't apply to all of these kids. And finally, DeWayne's suicide, which appears to take place during the original filming, actually took place after the crews had left Seattle. They had to return to shoot the funeral.

These aren't exactly minor complaints, but the warmth and power of *Streetwise* more than compensate for them. Despite its failings, this is documentary done right, both sweet and painful: in a word, human. —John Leland

MURPHY'S ROMANCE

1986. Sally Field, James Garner, Brian Kerwin; dir. Martin Ritt. 107m. (PG-13) \$79.95. RCA/Columbia. Image: good.

Before hitting its stride as a semi-sophisticated comedy of manners, *Murphy's Romance* sputters along so curiously that you can almost envision God and the Devil hovering over the production. God says, "You know what would be really neat? How about we remake *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* in a country setting?" The Devil replies, "Except in place of Alice we have Sally Field as an aging Gidget raising the son she had with Moon-Doggie!"

God recoils. "Gidget!? Moon-Doggie? If you're gonna stick in a divorced Gidget, I'm gonna have her take up with a widowed Bret Maverick." The Devil smiles. "James Garner, huh? Okay. But for half the picture he has to talk like Jack Lemmon." "Nice touch," says God. "He'll be a cinch for an Oscar nomination." And they get financing.

Theology aside, *Murphy's Romance* survives the shaky melding of Field's incredibly self-pitying divorcee and Garner's mile-long quips to become an appealing look at the cautious evolution of relationship between two pessimists, with the languid catalyst of her ex-husband's unexpected arrival to prod them along.

The story is as simple as an obtuse triangle. Field, broke, son in tow, arrives in a modern-day cow town hoping to establish a horse training facility. Because of (and despite) her continuous po'mouthing, she strikes up a tenuous friendship with Garner, town druggist and cantankerous liberal. His interest is strictly paternal until her ne'er-do-well ex appears and moves in on a platonic basis that would seem ridiculous if not for Brian Kerwin's evocation of purely ingenuous manipulation. His good-natured immaturity serves as the innocuous X-factor in the equation the three principals evolve. In fact, Kerwin virtually steals the film, gushing praise for a

slasher film that Garner, Field, and son have all walked out on, and later asking a gaggle of toddlers at a picnic if they need more beer at their table, a drunken inquiry made with the utmost sincerity.

The subtle friction between Garner and Kerwin takes an interesting turn as Field allows herself a bit of ego-building over the dual attention. Murphy's Romance gracefully avoids a major confrontation between the two roosters with a last-minute plot embellishment that serves to solidify each character in a favorable light. Thanks to Martin Ritt's warmly intelligent direction, Murphy's Romance is good-natured without being cloying, and manages to succeed despite the irritating kinks of its stars' portrayals.

—John Walker

A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET PART 2: FREDDY'S REVENGE

1985. Robert Englund, Mark Patton, Kim Myers; dir. Jack Sholder. 87m. (R) cc \$79.95. Media. Image: good.

In the homicidal-maniac-of-the-'80s sweepstakes, Freddy Krueger, that mozzarella-faced terrorizer of teens, is well on his way to cult figuredom. The most delightfully malicious character to



A Nightmare on Elm Street Part 2: Freddy's Revenge

cross the screen in years, Freddy easily overshadows those two mama's boys from the '70s, Michael Myers (*Halloween*) and Jason (*Friday the 13th*).

His first appearance was in Wes Craven's terrific A Nightmare on Elm Street. Part 1 (1984) was a surprise success, a genuine original that breathed new death into a stale genre. In it, a group of teenagers all dream that Freddy is pursuing them, offering a free shave with his razor-tipped glove. The kids who don't make it past Freddy's veg-o-matic don't wake up at all. Nightmare had pretty much everything you could ask from a horror film: energy, imagination, and some knockout moments of terror. A

clever script and nifty special effects didn't hurt either, but its greatest assets were an inspired concept and Freddy.

Nightmare 2 doesn't advance on its progenitor, but it does borrow the original's essential elements and constructs an above-average entertainment around them. It's five years later, and a new family has moved into the house. Son Jesse (Mark Patton) receives a few nocturnal visits from our anti-hero, who wants Jesse's body to waste a few dozen locals. "You've got the body, I've got the brains," Freddy croaks, peeling back his skull to emphasize the point. With the help of a plucky girlfriend, Lisa (Kim Myers), Jesse figures out who this Krueger character is, but it may be too late.

Director Jack Sholder and screenwriter David Chaskin are shameless borrowers, not just from Craven's Nightmare but from Risky Business and Alien (guess which scene) as well. The cornball power-of-love climax seems like a direct cop from Altered States. The worst excesses of the teen-horror-pic form are amply displayed in the inevitable poolside party massacre. Do we really need to see another batch of barely dressed kids get slaughtered for the sin of having a good time? (At least Sholder avoids the usual coitus homicidus.) There is, unfortunately, a bizarre S&M murder involving a gym coach. Don't get me wrong, I've wanted to ice a few coaches in my time too, but the gratuitous fag-bashing suggested here is hard to stomach.

On the plus side, Nightmare 2 opens with a punchy dream sequence and the momentum from that first scene is maintained throughout. The teen leads are atypically appealing, and Hope Lange and Clu Gulager are droll as Jesse's concerned mother and overbearing father. Of course, the real attraction is Freddy, who's built up enough steam for additional sequels (Return of the Freddy? The Freddy Strikes Back?). As he noted in the first film, "You can't kill me-I'm already dead!" If the next few installments of Freddy's tale maintain this energy level, I'll look forward to seeing him in my dreams. -Louis Kesten

THE BEST OF TIMES

1986. Robin Williams, Kurt Russell, Pamela Reed, Donald Moffat; dir. Roger Spottiswoode. 105m. (PG-13) Hi cc \$79.95. LV \$34.95. Embassy. Image: good.

Give Robin Williams a strong enough role—like T.S. Garp—and it's easy to forget the bizarre characters usually associated with him. *The Best of Times*, despite funny moments, is neither inventive enough to submerge Williams' manic personality nor lunatic enough to exploit it.

The single joke that trundles the film



The Best of Times

forward needs either more discipline to punch up its sarcastic view of small-town life, or more anarchy to energize its huffing and puffing. Instead, it mostly marks comic time, with the subtlety of a halftime drum corps, until a climactic, overly contrived gridiron grapple.

Williams plays Jack Dundee, a milguetoast banker in Taft, California, who, in 1972, becomes the biggest loser in a town famous for them. As a third-string running back galloping goalward with seconds to go, he butterfingers the Winning Pass in the Big Game against the town's arch rivals from Bakersfield. No one—least of all himself—lets him forget it. Fourteen years later, Jack's still rerunning the film of his faux pass, obsessing about football, and refusing to grow up. Meanwhile, he's married into Bakersfield money (the better to be humiliated) and rotting in a do-nothing job for his rich sugar-daddy-in-law.

One day, Dundee's friendly local hooker suggests a delayed replay. Nanoo, nanoo, thinks Mork from the planet Jock. From that moment, Jack Dundee drives everyone nuts in his effort to restage the Game and reclaim his honor. Williams is ably abetted in his hi-jinks by Kurt Russell as Reno Hightower, the revered quarterback who pitched the bumbled bomb, and Pamela Reed as Hightower's gritty, fed-up wife.

Best of Times kicks off with a funny history of Taft's heritage of losing. But the laughs that follow stall as often as Dundee's beat-up car. Best moments: Williams miming an entire football game to cajole Russell back into cleats and Russell trying to win his wife back by warbling "Close to You" through her motel door as she sneaks away through a rear window.

The film's occasional moodiness and unconvincing turnabout climax suggest possible origins as a serious project joked up along the way. If so, writer Ron Shelton and director Spottiswoode didn't go far enough. More craziness, especially from Williams, could only have goosed the sitcom-tidy plot. Best of Times, too, drops the ball.

—Stan Pinkwas

REVOLUTION

1985. Al Pacino, Nastassja Kinski, Donald Sutherland, Joan Plowright; dir. Hugh Hudson. 125m. (PG) Hi St cc \$79.95. LV St CX cc \$39.98. Warner. Image: good.

Every so often comes a film so unusually poor that one wonders how it could ever have made it to the screen. Imagine yourself with a pocketful of moneyenough, say, to mount an elaborate fullscale period epic. (These days, that means \$18 to \$30 million, maybe less if you can shoot in Great Britain at the dollar's ebb.) Someone offers you a script about the American Revolutionary war that is ponderous with dialogue and confused in its motives. Then you find out the good part: Al Pacino is lined up to play a colonial fisherman (or blacksmith; it's not clear which), and Nastassja Kinski has agreed to portray the radical daughter of a war profiteer.

If you're smart, you walk. If you're an executive at Warner Bros., apparently, you reach for your checkbook. The film that comes to mind most often while watching *Revolution* is Stanley Kubrick's *Barry Lyndon*, another megaton movie. Both films were shot in the same misty available-light style. Both take the historically-accurate approach to period costume and setting. And both are tedious. Watching some slow films, you might occasionally check your wristwatch. In the case of *Revolution*, you're more likely to need a calendar.

To be surgically precise, here's exactly what makes this so unbearable:

Miscasting and dialects. Pacino, who (naturally) plays a New Yorker, albeit a citizen of 210 years ago, dems, deeses, and doses his way through history, suggesting *Dog Day Afternoon* played in knee socks and an ill-fitting shirt. Kinski,



Revolution

who speaks her lines in that confusing suburban-American/middle-European accent of hers, seems to be living through Viet Nam, not the revolution, more an 18th-century brat than a patriot.

The British. Portraying them unidimensionally, either as hopeless upper-class wimps or impotent, wigged sadists, may be historically true, but it makes for a dull movie. Donald Sutherland, we should note, portrays Sergeant Major Peasy (the name says it all), a lousy redcoat with neither a brain nor a heart, and almost pulls it off.

Dramatic content. What little there is tends to concern Pacino and Kinski, who first spot each other while his boat is pulling away from a dock, then later, in the middle of a battlefield, act like close friends. On at least two other occasions—months and years apart—they renew their acquaintance, finally to reunite as lovers at the war's conclusion. The script offers no other clues regarding their relationship.

For the record, Hugh Hudson also directed *Chariots of Fire* and *Greystoke*, the revisionist Tarzan film. Of passing note is the appearance of Annie Lennox, singer in the pop group Eurythmics. Bafflingly, she is awarded a major credit for a single crowd scene in which she continuously screams.

—Timothy Onosko

AGNES OF GOD

1985. Jane Fonda, Anne Bancroft, Meg Tilly; dir. Norman Jewison. 98m. (PG-13) Hi St ss cc \$79.95. RCA/Columbia. Image: excel.

Find a shockeroo tabloid story. Set up characters representing Rationality and Spirituality. Then turn them loose to find out why *Boy Spikes Nag's Orbs!* Or *Nun's Tot Found Slain, Trashed!* It's a recipe that's worked on Broadway—and in films.

In Agnes of God, playwright/screenwriter John Pielmeier recycles Peter Shaffer's Equus, offering up for sacrifice Agnes, a young nun whose dead baby is discovered in a convent wastebasket. While her court-appointed psychiatrist wastes no time rooting out a case history of parental promiscuity, childhood repression, eating disorders, hysteria, rape, and murder, Agnes' Mother Superior tries to keep the lid on. The conflict is punctuated by debates: does Agnes need spiritual healing or vigorous therapy and an air-tight courtroom defense?

Pielmeier tries to create complex antagonists, but, saddled with trite speeches, they're never more than schematic bookends. Skulking under her habit and casting quick glances over thick, rimless glasses, Anne Bancroft tries to develop the Mother Superior's worldly protectiveness: Jane Fonda animates the

shrink with chain-smoking nervousness. But neither is assisted by director Jewison, who allows Bancroft excessive teeth-gnashing and lets Fonda indulge in aerobically exhausting pep talks. "Agnes," she seems to be saying, "work those power-of-positive-thinking muscles until they burn!"

Meg Tilly's performance hits the note Pielmeier was after. When finally cornered, she describes her probable rape



Agnes of God

as "enfoldment in an angel's wings," her hands admitting guilt by gushing blood. She makes us feel the deep links between hysteria and the stigmata of suffering and grace. Tilly's trademark is her blank purity. In *The Big Chill*, her character's new wave numbness was unfairly dismissed by a bummed-out protest march generation blind to the ethics of nihilism. In *Agnes of God*, her innocence is still powered by a neurotically passive undercurrent.

The excellent transfer captures the nunnery's soft-glo radiance, a world of dazed beatitude that traps, and releases, this psycho with a halo.

—Kathy Huffhines

SMOOTH TALK

1985. Laura Dern, Treat Williams, Mary Kay Place, Margaret Welsh, Levon Helm; dir. Joyce Chopra. 91m. (PG-13) \$79.95. Vestron. Image: good.

Watching Joyce Chopra's drama about a girl's first grapplings with sexual awareness, one can sense a beautiful movie slipping through the director's fingers. Early scenes of three high schoolers coping with summer boredom—giggling at guys in the mall, sneaking away to the beach, fighting with mothers who resent their nascent womanhood-are unsentimental and not bound by cinematic convention. The film promises a rare look at female adolescent sexuality that doesn't cop out with pat adult moralizing about the difference between sex and love or the smug assurance that they'll grow out of it. Connie (Laura Dern) and

Laura (Margaret Welsh) receive no *Breakfast Club*-type deliverance; as each veil is lifted, the mystery gets even more confusing. And the girls aren't unwilling lambs being led to slaughter, they're sexual beings learning about their sexuality, and there's no need for cautionary directorial safety nets. The film allows the girls their desires; *Smooth Talk* promises to be an American *A Nos Amours*, but then betrays itself to become the cautionary tale it set out to replace.

The film is based on Joyce Carol Oates' short story, Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?, and a part of the problem may be Oates' concept of allegorical realism, in which fantasy and reality count identically according to their content. After scenes in the mall and at the pick-up hamburger stand rigorously define what kind of boys Connie finds attractive, Smooth Talk devolves into a quasi-fantastic encounter with a man totally outside this type. Arnold Friend (Treat Williams) is an obsessive, overtly sexual adult cruiser, with a convertible and a dumb hood sidekick. He's self-assured, aggressive, physically imposing. When Connie's family goes off to a Sunday afternoon barbecue, leaving her home alone, Arnold appears, announcing that he has come to deflower her. Connie eves the stranger with a mixture of fear and desire, a desire which doesn't jibe with what has gone before. She threatens to call the police but, as the film caves in to the conventional equation of female sexuality with violation, she gets in the

It's the great American cop-out, obscured only by two deliberate ambiguities. Arnold may be just a somewhat nightmarish fantasy. And it's not clear whether or not they have sex. But either way, the damage is done. After a beautiful start, *Smooth Talk* is a disappointment. The image of sexual martyrdom proved too strong. —John Leland

JAGGED EDGE

1985. Jeff Bridges, Glenn Close, Robert Loggia, Peter Coyote; dir. Richard Marquand. 108m. (R) Hi St ss cc \$79.95. LV St CX cc \$29.95. RCA/Columbia. Image: ercel

Jagged Edge is the kind of film my grandfather used to refer to as a "mutter mystery," the type that theater audiences exit from wearing a collective expression of stunned mystification, mumbling incoherently about certain...deficiencies in the film's structure. The problem here begins with a plot that is too claustrophobic to be very mysterious. A rich socialite is sadistically murdered in her bed by a leather-hooded madman. Jack Forrester, her husband (Jeff Bridges), is arrested on circumstantial



Jagged Edge

evidence; the state claims he did the dirty deed to secure her fortune (including the newspaper he publishes), which he stood to lose in a threatened divorce.

The subsequent battle rages between defense attorney Teddy Barnes (Glenn Close) and a D.A. (Peter Covote) who is her former boss. As the case progresses, Barnes' fervor increases because she's fallen in love with her client and knows the D.A. to be slime. Like any such jurisprudence drama, the potential outcome is limited: Jack either did it or he didn't. And for all Jack's supposed mystery, Bridges portrays him in a manner about as cold and threatening as Wally Cleaver. Indeed, if other characters didn't continually refer to him as n cold-manipulative-ice cube-bastard, you wouldn't suspect him of double-parking, let alone murder. Teddy rings equally untrue: a lawyer smart enough to be entrusted with a high-visibility murder case would likely be smart enough to refrain from sleeping with her client, at least until after the verdict was in. Only Robert Loggia as the defense's salty private investigator behaves rationally, inadvertantly providing Jagged Edge's biggest mystery, namely, how did the man who once played suave burglar T.H.E. Cat wind up looking like Jake LaMotta?

The final indictment of Jagged Edge is that director Richard Marquand has given it an emotional compression that doesn't even allow for *cheap* thrills, though scriptwriter Joe Eszterhas may be equally responsible for the story's flatness. Unlike the murder weapon described in its title, Jagged Edge is, to be blunt, pretty dull and pointless.

-John Walker

POWER

1986. Richard Gere, Julie Christie, Gene Hackman, E.G. Marshall; dir. Sidney Lumet. 111m. (R) \$79.95. Karl-Lorimar. Image: good.

Having successfully captured the lunatic machinations of TV moguls in *Network*, Sidney Lumet turns his attention to the shenanigans of political image-builders with *Power*. Unfortunately, for all the intimations of moral outrage, *Power* is at heart a timid, confused movie

that fails to deal with any of the issues it raises.

Lumet starts with a fairly interesting story: Pete St. John (Richard Gere) is the king of media consultants, a highpriced, amoral genius who can get anyone elected. After his old friend, Ohio Senator Hastings (E.G. Marshall) mysteriously decides not to seek re-election, Pete is approached by Jerome Cade (J.T. Walsh), a rich industrialist interested in Hastings' soon-to-be-vacated seat. Though lukewarm to the slimy Cade and suspicious of his adviser (Denzel Washington). Pete agrees to mastermind the campaign. Then strange things begin to happen: Pete discovers his phone is tapped. A semi tries to run him off the road. Someone steals his private jet. What's going on?

Way too much, unfortunately. Pete is simultaneously overseeing candidates in two states and Central America. He romances his assistant (Kate Capshaw), seduces his ex-wife (Julie Christie), and clashes with a boozy former partner (Hackman), a remnant of the bygone era when politicians were less calculating.

Despite this plethora of plot lines, few of the images connect. In the age of Reagan, there's simply nothing startling in the revelation that politicians are packaged, or in the disclosure that TV spots sell personalities, not confront the issues. Half a century ago, *Power's* wide-eyed sensibility might have been timely, but not now.

Still, the biggest flaw is Gere himself. Appearing in nearly every scene, he resolutely resists the temptation to act. functioning instead as a kind of black hole that sucks all the energy from the film. He's a cardboard presence rather than a character. By contrast, Denzel Washington's turn as the heavy is a stunning display of quiet authority. Veterans Hackman, Christie, Marshall, Beatrice Straight, and Fritz Weaver are largely wasted. Power's dull, incessant dialogue is sharp and clear, but the colors look soft and washed-out. The proportions seem to have suffered in the transfer to tape as well, with heads often threatening to pop through the screen in close-ups.

—Jon Young

QUICK TAKES ON FILMS

THE LIVING DESERT

1953. Dir. James Algar; nar. Winston Hibler. 79m. \$69.95. Disney. Image: excel.

Time-lapse shots of lushly blossoming flowers and a macabre scorpion mating dance are among the famous scenes in this Oscar-winning documentary, the first of Disney's "True-Life Adventure" films. The voiceover varies from metaphysically literate to overbearingly campy, and some of the interaction between species seems set-up-if predators so seldom get their prey, how do they survive? Nonetheless, the color photography is eye-catching and painterly as it relates the natural drama: Will the gila monster get the ground squirrel? Will the snarling bobcat take on the fearsome peccaries or stay on top of the cactus? Watch and marvel.

-Mark Fleischmann

THE STATUE OF LIBERTY 1986. Pr./dir. Ken Burns, 60m, \$24,95.

Vestron. Image: good.

Jerzy Kosinski says that from the age of 12, his fondest lady love has been Miss Liberty, and the film seems to second that emotion. Everything you'd want to know about the statue—and more, much more—is told in the very dry first half, narrated by historian David McCullough. Some touching footage in the latter portion shows grateful immigrants arriving decades ago, and then talking now about the meaning of their new lives. But the piece never confronts the prejudice many of them-contrary to Miss Liberty's promises—actually encountered. It's basically an hour-long homage, appropriately released to coincide with the centennial celebration, and perfect for anyone feeling especially pious. (Vestron is donating "part of the proceeds" to the Statue of Liberty/Ellis Island Foundation.) -Michael Musto

SILENT NIGHT, DEADLY NIGHT

1985. Robert Brian Wilson, Lilyan Chauvin, Gilmer McCormick; dir. Charles E. Seller, Jr. 92m. (R) \$79.95. U.S.A. Image: good.

Surely one of the most cynical horror exercises to come down the chimney in a long time, *Silent Night*, *Deadly Night* details the exploits of Billy, a teenage psycho who dresses up as Santa and whups all the naughty kids on the block. Be good for goodness sake, 'cause this Santa



The Living Desert

heaves a mean axe and knows some neat tricks with strands of Christmas lights. (Seems a Kringle-clad mugger killed Billy's folks when he was 6, so the boy has a complex.) Parents were steamed when ads for this slayride started popping up in the middle of afternoon cartoons; those who have seen it are offended more by its witlessness and utter predictability. Devoid of suspense and humor, *Silent Night* fails even as amusing trash. Ho ho ho.

-Louis Kesten

GRUNT!

THE WRESTLING MOVIE

1986. Mad Dog Joe De Curso, Marilyn Dodds Frank, Steven Cepello; dir. Allen Holzman. 91m. (R) \$69.95. New World. Image: good.

The promotional material for Grunt! included a clump of plastic vomit; unfortunately the movie doesn't live up to the hype. Only the opening brawl, in which Mad Dog De Curso decapitates Skull Crusher Johnson, could be considered at all barf-inducing. Grunt!, a Spinal Tapstyle wrestling mockumentary, attempts to make an already preposterous spectacle even more absurd. Most of the gags are pretty lame, but some are so bad they're funny anyway. In any case, Grunt! will go down in history for the first big-screen appearance of Rebecca De Mornay's dad, Wally George, who does a cameo as himself, a rabid right-wing talk show host. If you've never seen a man froth at the mouth, check out Wally's truly astonishing performance here.

-Louis Kesten

NASHVILLE GIRL

1986. Monica Gayle, Glenn Corbett, Jesse White; dir. Gus Trikonis. 90m. Hi \$59.95. Charter. Image; good.

Country music may be a sleazy business, but it's not as bad as this horrible movie makes out. Young Jamie Barker leaves her family's farm to answer a magazine ad placed by a Nashville song shark (Jesse White, better known as TV's lonely Maytag repairman), a scoundrel like everyone poor Jamie meets in Nashville. Like the movie's promotional copy says, "All they want is her body...all she wants is a break." Even those who get a perverse kick out of campy country movies would do well to skip this one. Offensive, idiotic, and bogus.

—Andrew Roblin

MORONS FROM OUTER SPACE

1985. Griff Rhys Jones, Mel Smith, James B. Sikking; dir. Mike Hodges. 86m. (R) Hi \$69.95. Thorn. Image: good.

This English sci-fi farce came to our shores with a witty marketing campaign: "They came. They saw. They did a little shopping." Promising, right? Wrong. The morons don't do any shopping—it's that funny. Morons is remarkably, almost incomprehensibly, worse than you can imagine. (The best joke: one moron pukes on another during their big exploitational stage debut.) A friend once likened the sensation of watching *Porky's* to inadvertently putting your hand in a puddle of spit and keeping it there. Now I understand. Watch this to its conclusion and you'll never feel the same about yourself again. —John Leland

PRAYING MANTIS

1983. Jonathan Pryce, Cherie Lunghi, Carmen du Sautoy; dir. Jack Gold. 145m. \$59.95. Karl-Lorimar. Image: good.

Thanks to a fortuitously impeccable sense of smell, a rich professor's secretary turns the table on a murderous plot by his evil wife and timid assistant. Too long by an hour, this low-budget exercise in plodding British psychodrama (you'll be praying for the end of the movie) undoubtedly read better than it translates to film. Each character plays a single note for the duration of the film, including a young (though balding) Jonathan Pryce, who has since done far better work on stage and screen (e.g., *Brazil*).

-Richard Gehr

VIDEOSMADE FOR HOME VIEWING

PRINCESS DAISY

1983. Merete Van Kamp, Stacy Keach, Robert Urich, Lindsay Wagner; dir. Waris Hussein. 188m. 2 cas. Hi \$69.95. RCA/Columbia. Image: excel.

The logic of selling a TV mini-series like *Princess Daisy* on videocassette has, until now, escaped me. You'd think if a person wanted to watch something dumb and lurid at their convenience, other types of programming are, if not dumber, certainly more lurid *and* more convenient. (Clocking in at three commercial-free hours, *Daisy* requires a certain *commitment* to the mediocre.)

Despite its prime-time coyness and absurdist lines ("Do you believe in love at first sight?") spoken in dead seriousness, Princess Daisy has a few attributes that could make it as de rigueur an item for the next generation of couch potatoes as, say, Plan 9 from Outer Space is to the current crop. The first is a plot based on Judith Krantz's best-seller which stacks its cliches so precariously that you'd swear that Saturday Night Live's pathological liar Tommy Flanagen wrote the script. American movie queen (Lindsay Wagner) meets Russian prince (Stacy Keach) at a polo match and, inside five minutes, they have produced identical twins Daisy and Danielle. The latter, in a twist on the "evil twin" syndrome, is severely retarded. As one might guess, Danielle's problems cause a rift between ma and pa that is still unresolved as Lindsay takes a fatal detour off the Pacific Coast Highway. In fact, the prince begrudges Danielle right up to the moment that he crashes his antique WWI fighter plane while doing figure eights...on Christmas! Then there's Daisy's creepy half-brother who wants only the best for Daisy and, um, to sleep with her. After he flushes her trust fund down the commode, Princess Daisy has no choice but to get a job as an extremely successful advertising executive. Not to fret: she is quickly plucked out of a creative meeting to become...an international cosmetics model and spokesperson! Yeah! Of course, Super Corp. (the cosmetics conglomerate) is run by a self-made zillionaire who has everything that money can buy and nobody to share it with...

Who or what could be the cherry on top of this heap of characters so flat they can barely scrape together a single dimension between them? Hitler's clone? Rin Tin Tin? How about...Ringo! Yeah, yeah, yeah! Everybody's favorite ex-

Beatle plays a character so irrelevant that you may start eying the background for yellow submarines. And don't forget about that severely retarded identical twin!

Fortuitously, sprouting from this dung-heap with all the freshness of her character's namesake is ingenue Merete Van Kamp in the title role. She strides through *Princess Daisy* with just enough fearless dignity to make every other element of this silliness seem all the more absurd. Mark my words, your grandchildren are going to throw parties around this goonie masterpiece. I can see them now, shouting in unison: "Wrong twin, Ringo! Wrong twin!" —John Walker



The Ratings Game

THE RATINGS GAME

1986. Danny DeVito, Rhea Perlman, Gerrit Graham; dir. Danny DeVito. 102m. Hi cc \$79.95. LV Hi cc \$29.95. Paramount. Image; excel.

If you've watched much network TV recently, you've heard shows refer to other shows ad nauseum. It's as if the only fit subject for television is television, and that television is the main focus of life. It's this self-importance that Danny DeVito savages in his made for cable and video movie, *The Ratings Game*.

DeVito, *Taxi*'s terminally venal Louie DePalma, plays writer-producer-director-actor Nick deSalvo, who arrives in Hollywood from New Jersey armed with a briefcase full of ideas and a heartful of dreams. He finds showbiz harder to crack than expected; even when a freak set of circumstances gets one of his

shows scheduled, things still look bleak. But his new girlfriend (Perlman), who works for a Nielsen-like ratings service, offers him useful information, and de-Salvo uses Teamster connections to ensure its success.

Directed by DeVito and written by Jim Mulholland and Michael Barrie, The Ratings Game is a hilarious demolition of network thinking. DeVito's comic genius carries the picture, aided by a cornucopia of great character actors, including Barry Corbin, Louis Giambalvo, George Wendt, Vincent Schiavelli, and Allyce Beasley. The film revolves around story and character instead of jokes, which sharpens the humor and the focus. The mock TV shows are so real they could probably air. In fact, an ethnic series, featuring slovenly salt-of-the-earth Jersey Italians, is preferable to most current programs; the animated Goombas are charming enough to merit their own feature.

If you didn't see *The Ratings Game* on cable, be sure to catch it on video. It may not change how you look at television, but it will affect the way you look at the people who choose the television you look at.

—Steven Grant

DICK CLARK'S BEST OF BANDSTAND

1986 comp. B&W. 60m. Hi St \$29.95. LV \$29.95. Vestron. Image: good.

Rock'n'rollers, rejoice! Dick Clark has finally opened his vaults for public inspection, and not just the maddeningly brief glimpses that tease audiences of his television specials. This tape is the first in a series dipping into Clark's invaluable popmusic video archives.

Title notwithstanding, the clips here aren't from the weekday American Bandstand, but from the Saturday-night Dick Clark Show (1958 - 1960), with its marginally higher production values. There is, alas, no Elvis-he never sang for Dick Clark—but the lineup includes other white supernovas of the late '50s, plus too few black artists. Two of the performances are even accompanied by live sound, contrary to usual lip-sync tradition. Jerry Lee Lewis, bless him, refused to mime his song, and brought a bassist and drummer with him to inaugurate Clark's variety show with a righteous "Great Balls of Fire." The other live appearance, by Buddy Holly and the Crickets, actually comes from The Arthur Murray Party (1950 - 1960), (Clark

didn't have any Holly footage of his own.) The band looks understandably dour after Kathryn Murray's smilingly contemptuous introduction. Ah, the '50s!

The lip-sync performances have their moments as well. Debonair Sam Cooke sings "You Send Me" mostly in mesmerizing close-up. The Silhouettes ("Get a Job") indulge in mild choreography. A brush-cut, pop-eyed Big Bopper (Jape Richardson) mugs his way through "Chantilly Lace" with the aid of a telephone and acoustic guitar. There's also Bill Haley, the Everly Brothers, Dion and the Belmonts, the inevitable Fabian, Chubby Checker, and more! Plus, of course, audience shots that are themselves almost worth the price of admission. (Watch out for the ushers making sure things don't get too out of hand.) The Hi-Fi soundtrack is re-recorded and mixed in digital stereo.

A second volume, already in progress, will take *Bandstand* into the Motown years. This is definitely a series for pop historians—or just fans—to watch.

-Scott Isler

LISA SLIWA'S COMMON SENSE DEFENSE

1986. 59m. \$29.95. Vestron. Image: good.

There aren't any horrifying statistics here about the average number of women raped on a Saturday night, or any real-life accounts of gory assaults. Guardian Angel Lisa Sliwa, the (as she describes herself) "typical suburban princess" cum inner city vigilante, simply tells it like it is. Using some good-sense feminist philosophy as a backdrop, she explains that women are victims of crime more often than men, and that they can fight back. What women lack in strength, the small-framed Sliwa tells her studio class, they make up for in attitude, and Sliwa's got plenty of it. She advises you to keep calm during the first 60 seconds, the most crucial period of an attack, to plan out a strategy and react. The tape is geared to women with no former training in self-defense. Techniques are simple and effective: elbow jerking, eye popping, head butting, and finger peeling are a few of my favorites.

Strangely, this is as much a vehicle for Sliwa as it is a guide to self-defense. Much is made of Sliwa's part-time modeling career. The tape opens with her at a shoot, dressed in a tight skirt and made up to the hilt. After the brief session, Sliwa kisses the photographer, and accompanied by an MTV beat, sets out on the city streets, until an assailant grabs her and drags her into an alley. She quickly disposes of him with a few swift kicks and some rough stuff to the groin. Contrary to her later advice to attack



Lisa Sliwa's Common Sense Defense

quickly and run, Lisa hangs around to make sure her assailant is down and out, banging his head on the ground for good measure. After such a sensationalist introduction, it's a relief that the next two-thirds of the tape stays in the classroom for a video adaptation of Sliwa's live self-defense seminars. The last portion is the most contrived. A cute blonde stands in the middle of a deserted city street singing "I can take care of myself" while images from the previous lessons spring up around her and Lisa's silhouette *taichi*'s in the background.

These days it's hard to know who's selling what and what for. Still, Sliwa is fun to watch and learn from. Her sophisticated facade packs a powerful punch, and I admit, for a woman who can count the number of manicures she's ever had on one hand, it's deleriously funny to learn how to puncture a "creep's" vital pressure points without having to break a nail.

—Julia Lisella

STEVE MARTIN LIVE!

1984. Steve Martin, David Letterman, Teri Garr, Buck Henry; dir. Gary Weiss. 59m. \$59.95. Vestron. Image: good.

Even when this program originally played on Showtime a couple of years back it was outdated, filmed ca. *The Jerk* at the height of Martin's popularity as a recording, television, and concert attraction. Audiences raised on *Saturday Night Live* came primed to laugh and scream at the drop of a hat or arrow through the head. Martin didn't really have to work them, and during the first half of the concert (filmed in September 1979) which makes up the final two-thirds of the cassette, he doesn't.

The beginning of Martin's performance is mostly in the haphazard, "I'm a Ramblin' Guy" vein, without any kind of flow or pacing. There are moments—an expertly picked bluegrass banjo version of "The Impossible Dream," shark-bite hand gestures during an *a cappella* "Mack The Knife"—but he seems to be playing for himself, never connecting with the

hooting crowd despite its ready hysteria.

When he drops a juggled orange, however, he responds to the playful boos with feigned but touching hurt. Finally grounding himself with a whimsical monolog delivered in real character, Martin starts to build comedic momentum on storytelling and such classic repertoire as "Cat Juggling," "Happy Feet," "Getting Small," "Cat Handcuffs," and warped folk songs. The set closes with "Fun Balloon Animals," a delightful bit which ends with Martin, head encircled by malformed balloon animals and Groucho nose-and-glasses, proclaiming himself an "experienced professional" and warning followers not to attempt this at home. The dated nature of the show passes, exposing an exceedingly complicated and talented performer. Concert and cassette end with "King Tut," featuring Henry Winkler holding Egyptian scenery.

The first portion of the program consists of a 1977 Oscar-nominated short, *The Absent-Minded Waiter*, with Teri Garr and Buck Henry, and a cute segment showing him instructing David Letterman, Henny Youngman, Paul Simon, and Alan King how to be comedians.

—Jim Bessman

FRANK ZAPPA: DOES HUMOR BELONG IN MUSIC?

1985. 57m. Hi St. \$24.95. Maljack. Image: excel.

Composer/guitarist/"singer" Frank Zappa is one of pop music's most visible opponents of attempts to get the record industry to regulate lyric content. It's not entirely a disinterested move on Zappa's part; the songs on *Does Humor Belong in Music?* include "He's So Gay" and "Keep It Greasey" (*sic*). This live performance tape is not for prudes. It *is* for anyone who already appreciates Zappa's acerbic musical genius.

The program (which Zappa produced and directed) comes from an outdoors New York City performance in the summer of 1984. Casually attired in Bermuda shorts, Zappa leads a typically tight outfit—including two other guitarists and two keyboard players—through dizzying arrangements. The material goes as far back as the mid-'60s ("Trouble Every Day") but concentrates on '70s toons like "Dinah-Moe Humm" and "Honey, Don't You Wanta Man Like Me?"

Rapid cutting and camera zooming here can be as annoying as the MTV fare Zappa satirizes in "Be in My Video." Interview segments intercut with the concert prove Zappa isn't too charming offstage, but he does deliver the goods, artistically and technically: the digitally recorded soundtrack is as clear as the video image.

—Scott Isler

KEEP YER EYE ON THE TV:

Baseball instruction via video

By David McGee

When Casey Stengel uttered the immortal phrase, "You could look it up," he could hardly have envisioned a video age that would give new layers of meaning to his sagacity. Were the old professor still with us he would learn that not only can you look it up, you can freeze-frame it, slo-mo it, search and scan it, and even turn it off. Welcome to the world of baseball instructional videos. Many such tapes arrived in time for the new season, presenting a whole new learning opportunity for the video-ready generation.

A couple of the videos here—Mickey Mantle's Baseball Tips for Kids of All Ages (CBS/Fox, 62m., \$19.98) and Little League's Official How To Play Baseball by Video (MasterVision, 70m., \$39.95)—come close to being comprehensive, informed presentations of all phases of the game, including conditioning and mental preparedness. Each of the other titles has certain strengths, but they are flawed in one critical way or another.

Even a casual observer of youth league baseball can deduce that fielding is a skill most youngsters have great difficulty mastering. Yet the majority of baseball instructional videos favor the lumber, not the leather. On **Sports Clinic Baseball** (Video Associates, 80m., \$29.95) the San Diego Padres' Garry Templeton, a former All-Star and still one of the best fielders in the major leagues, gets about five minutes to explain the intricacies of infielding, while

teammate Kurt Bevacqua gives the once-over-lightly to outfielding skills.

On the other hand, Baseball the Pete Rose Way (Embassy, 60m., \$19.95) offers instruction on turning two from either the second base or shortstop positions, as well as executing the first base-to-pitcher-covering putout and fielding slow rollers bare-handed from third base. To his credit, the voluble Rose also uses slow-motion instant replay to demonstrate proper fielding techniques. The Mickey Mantle and Little League videos really stress the importance of defense. In the former, Phil Rizzuto details the finer points of infield and outfield defense via cogent, concise explanations of glove technique, throwing, and turning various double plays. The tape also includes game clips of major league players executing the skills being demonstrated by Mantle, Rizzuto, and pitcher Whitey Ford. It's a smart touch for a program geared (despite its title) to young players, whose capacity for emulating the subtlest nuances of major league play should suggest more extensive use of such clips as teaching aids themselves.

The Little League tape (see "Video Quick Takes," May 1986) is the best balanced. Like the Mantle tape, this one opens with a warmup segment and proceeds methodically through every phase of the game—offensive and defensive—in a straightforward manner: players run through various drills, coaches correct their mistakes, players go at it again in the correct way. A most effective presentation.

Sound advice on hitting and pitching can be found on almost all of these tapes. Standing in the batter's box with a bat in his hands, Pete Rose brings an unusual degree of charisma to his task and also imparts much wisdom on Baseball the Pete Rose Way and Pete Rose: Winning Baseball (Video Gems, 55m., \$19.95). In The Pete Rose Way, he speaks directly to the camera, apparently extemporaneously, with fractured grammar and syntax (ditto for his cohorts on the tape, pitching coach Claude Osteen and catching coach Sonny Ruberto), but his presentation is thorough and every bit as sensible as a Casey Stengel press conference, when you get right down to it. On Winning Baseball, Rose—alternately avuncular and gently tyrannical—instructs a group of youngsters. He seems to delight in chiding the only girl to get her ponytail out of her



eyes so she can see the ball; when demonstrating proper batting stance, he advises her to "watch my pretty red shoes." Still, despite his sexism, Pete's a good teacher, fundamentally sound in all phases of the game and able to impart his knowledge with both humor and (generally) sensitivity. Added thoughtful instruction on pitching and hitting is available on *Sports Clinic Baseball*, courtesy of Jerry Reuss and Terry Kennedy respectively.

Hard-core players should also check out last year's Base Running Basics with Maury Wills (Morris, 60m., \$19.95), at once an oddity and the ne plus ultra of instructional videos. It deals only with the subject of its title, but treats the material in greater depth than is possible on a tape devoted to teaching the whole game. Morris also has intensive instructional videos on pitching (The Science of Pitching with Wes Stock, 59m., \$19.95) and hitting (The Art of Hitting with Vada Pinson, 59m., \$19.95), but both subjects are covered effectively in other titles. Only the Mantle tape approaches (but does not equal) Maury Wills' dissertation on base-running fundamentals and nuances.

Best buys? For \$100 and change, a quartet comprised of *The Pete Rose Way*, *Mickey Mantle's Baseball Tips, Little League's How to Play Baseball,* and *Base Running with Maury Wills* amounts to a first-rate baseball camp on tape. Batter

MasterVision, 969 Park Ave., N.Y., N.Y. 10028; 212-879-0448.

Morris, PO Box 443, Redondo Beach, Calif. 90277: 213-379-2414.

Video Associates, 5419 Sunset Blvd., L.A., Calif. 90027; 213-463-3255.

See last page of "Directory" for other addresses.



VIDEO QUICK TAKES

PETE TOWNSHEND'S DEEP END

1986. Pete Townshend and band; dir. Keef. 86m. \$29.95. 29m. \$19.98. Atlantic. Image: good.

Pete Townshend's recent White City video release (Vestron) included a tantalizing scene of him performing "Face the Face" on a stage crowded with musicians, his first band since the Who. This full-scale solo concert, mounted in London last year, features an even more populous (but extremely well-rehearsed) ensemble of horn players, backup singers, keyboardists, and even ex-Pink Floyd guitarist David Gilmour. The program includes familiar Who songs ("Won't Get Fooled Again," "Magic Bus," "Pinball Wizard"), a sampling from Townshend's solo albums, and a couple of choice R&B covers ("I Put a Spell on You," "Barefootin"). Sporting a short haircut and looking fit and merry, Townshend is clearly no longer the raging adolescent of his prime; still, he's vigorous enough to put across this energetic (and unique—he's never done a solo concert in the U.S.) show with abundant enthusiasm and characteristic -Ira Robbins

THE ROD STEWART **CONCERT VIDEO**

1984. 83m. Hi St \$29.95. Karl-Lorimar. Image: good.

This one starts out as a fantastic career documentary, but brief glimpses of Rod the Mod with the Jeff Beck Group and the Faces quickly give way to the main event, staged like all too many such tapings in a cavernous arena. The beaky one does his best, burning rubber all over the huge stage as he belts out his hits, pausing only for dues-paying (Otis Redding's "Sitting on the Dock of the Bay") and nostalgia (the Faces' old "Stay with Me"). He'd benefit from a smaller venue and a less mechanical band, but the old pro's spirit remains undimmed.

-Mark Fleischmann

AN EVENING WITH PAUL ANKA

1986. Dir. Joshua White. 87m. Hi St \$39,95, LV St CX \$29,95, U.S.A. Im-

Paul Anka enters through a cloud of fog and proceeds to indulge in more Vegas cliches (though he's actually performing in New Haven, Connecticut)



than even Wayne Newton ever imagined. He holds a glittery microphone, takes bows in the middle of songs, and kisses the ladies in the audience (even when it's not clear they want him to). Anka turns his self-worship classic, "My Way," into a three-act opera and doesn't disappoint with his misogynistic "Having My Baby" either. In fact, he tries so hard to please that his fans will have to like this comprehensive program. (Everyone else can deal with it in his or her own -Michael Musto

JAMES CAGNEY: THAT YANKEE DOODLE DANDY

1981. James Cagney, Pat O'Brien, Donald O'Connor; wr./pr./dir. Richard Schickel, nar. Treat Williams. 72m. \$29.95. MGM/UA. Image: excel.

Cagney is captured in all his strutting, tough-talking bravado style in this adulatory tape created by film critic Schickel. Clips from all of Cagney's most notable films are incorporated, plus an interview done at the time of Ragtime, in which the star proves to be as honest and likable as you'd expect. Nothing too probing or revolutionary here, just a nice summation of a late great's brilliant career.

-Michael Musto

ESCAPES

1986. Vincent Price; dir. David Steensland. 72m. \$79.95. Prism. Image: excel.

Rod Serling's Twilight Zone inspired this made-for-video fantasy anthology. With Vincent Price as host and psychic seducer, the program aims for macabre humor and mystic overtones. Director David Steensland keeps dialogue for his low-rent cast to a minimum, often aiming for a wordless contemplative qualitythough his reach exceeds his grasp and the padding may strain your fast-forward button. Best of the five are the lovely, sentimental Jonah's Dream and the nasty, pithy Something's Fishy; the others are pretty derivative. Footnote: Escapes was filmed at 30 frames-per-second for optimum video quality.

-Mark Fleischmann

CHANGE YOUR JOB TO

CHANGE YOUR LIFE 1985. 60m. \$29.95. Karl-Lorimar. Im-

Most of us could use career consultant Walt Slaughter's advice sooner or later. His expertise is beyond reproach, his on-camera personality not bad as he holds forth on strategies, resumes, and interview techniques. But soporific co-producer/host Jerry Williams should have stayed off-camera. Shot head-on with numbing monotony, the program's few attempts at visual variation are unimaginative throwaways. Typical-and time-consuming—is the opening true/ false quiz with its obvious setup questions. You must watch the rest of the program to find the answers. Surefire idea, dull execution.

-Mark Fleischmann

TWELVE STEPS...

THE VIDEO 1986. 35m. \$39.95. Gerald T. Rogers Productions Inc. (5225 Old Orchard Rd., Suite 23, Skokie, Illinois 60077). Image: good.

Although billed as "an inspirational home video that serves to motivate and provide spiritual strength for living life fully and joyously, one day at a time," Twelve Steps is merely an introduction to, not a substitute for, a program of the same name designed to help people overcome addictions. The approach, developed from rules propounded by Alcoholics Anonymous, is presented by enumerating the steps while elaborating on each with written quotations from program adherents. While offering a complete introduction for those interested, the structure is repetitive, the photography a little too slick, and the troubled people too clean-cut to accurately reflect the seriousness of the subject.

-Matthew Pimm

NEW RELEASES ON TAPE AND DISC



Avenging Godfather. 1979. Rudy Ray Moore, Carol Speed. Excop hunts dealers of PCP-laced cocaine. 93m. (R) \$49.95. Ac-

The Bad Bunch. Greydon Clark, Tom Johnigan, Aldo Ray. White man tries to befriend black street gang. 82m. (R) \$59.95. United.

Black Moon Rising. 1986. Tommy Lee Jones, Linda Hamilton, Richard Jaeckel, Bubba Smith. Car thieves appropriate government agent's high-tech roadster. 100m. (R) Hi cc \$79.95. New World.

Black Shampoo. John Daniels, Tanya Boyd, Joe Ortiz. Hair stylist wields chainsaw against mobsters harassing his girlfriend. 90m. (R) \$59.95. United.

Boomerang. 1976. Alain Delon, Carla Gravina. Ex-con springs son sentenced to life imprisonment for murdering cop while stoned. Dubbed. 101m. \$59.95. Unicorn.

Cat in the Cage. Sybil Danning, Colleen Camp. Spirited competition for control of family estate. 90m. \$39.95. World.

The Defiant. 1970. Ken't Lane, John Rubenstein, Tisha Sterling. Street gang leader faces dissension after admitting orphan girl to group. 93m. \$69.95. Lightning.

Delta Fox. 1977. Priscilla Barnes, Richard Lynch, Stuart Whitman, John Ireland. Miami smuggler flees cross-country. 92m. \$39.95. Independent.

The Final Comedown. 1972. Billy Dee Williams. Police confront

All available audio information

is provided. The following abbre-

D: Dolby noise reduction

hearing impaired

cc: closed-captioned for the

ss: surround sound

AUDIO FEATURES

viations apply:

St: stereo

Hi: Hi-Fi



black militant group. 84m. (R) Hi \$59.95. Charter.

Fire and Ice. 1983. anim. Voices of Susan Tyrell, William Ostrander; dir. Ralph Bakshi. Young warrior survives destruction of village by glacier, pursues wizard. 81m. (PG) LV St CX \$29.95. RCA/Columbia.

The Fire in the Stone. Gang of children trace stolen opals. 97m. \$39.95. Scholastic. (Karl).

Flash and the Firecat. 1975. Roger Davis, Tricia Sembera, Richard Kiel. Bank-robbing couple. 85m. \$39.95. Independent.

48 Hours to Live. 1958. Anthony Steel, Ingemar Johansson. Terrorists kidnap nuclear scientist, demand information on missile construction. 86m. Hi \$39.95.

The Golden Voyage of Sinbad. 1973. John Phillip Law, Caroline Munro, Tom Baker. Prince battles evil Vizier for island's treasure. Effects by Ray Harryhausen. LV cc \$29.95. RCA/Columbia.

The Hitchhikers. 1971. Misty Rowe, Norman Klar. Roadside femmes fatales. \$39.95. Independent.

Kansas Pacific. 1953. Sterling Hayden, Eve Miller, Barton MacLane. Railroad construction team ca. Civil War. 73m. \$9.95. Congress.

Kid Colter. 1985. Jim Stafford, Jeremy Shamos. Kidnapped boy abandoned in wilderness. 101m. (PG) Hi St cc \$79.98. Playhouse.

PROGRAMMING LEGEND

Varies according to type of program as follows: Films: original theatrical release. Madefor-broadcast: first telecast. Made-for-video: first release in any format. Compilations: production of collected work.

FORMAT

All programs are available in Beta and VHS unless noted. All programs on videodisc are also available on videocassette unless noted. The following abbreviations apply:

B: Beta videocassette V: VHS videocassette 8: 8mm videocassette

CED: CED videodisc

LV: LaserVision videodisc

rating refers to the transfer quality and overall visual appearance. For non-theatrical productions, it refers to overall visual quality.

excel.: exceptionally attractive and/or faithful to the original

IMAGE QUALITY For theatrical releases, this

CX: CX encoded

Editors' choices in the "Directory" are highlighted with red titles.

good: adequate but unremarkable

poor: seriously flawed

ETCETERA

Official MPAA ratings (G, PG, PG-13, R) are provided when available. All programs are in color unless noted. Prices are not generally given for CED discs.

anim.: animated B&W: black & white cas.: videocassette comp.: compilation dir.: directed by m.: minutes

nar.: narrated by pr.: produced by RE: reissue

sub.: subtitled wr.: written by



The Kill. 1973. Richard Jaeckel, Henry Duval, Judy Washington. South China investigator hired to recover money stolen from casino. 81m. B Hi, V \$59.95. New World.

Knights of the City. 1985. Leon Isaac Kennedy, Nicholas Campbell, Smokey Robinson. Musical Miami street gang in search of recording contract. 87m. (R) Hi St \$69,95. New World.

Lucky Luciano. 1974. Gian Maria Volonte, Rod Steiger, Edmond O'Brien, Vincent Gardenia. Mobster's last years. 108m. (R) Hi \$59.95. Charter.

Macho Callahan. 1970. David Janssen, David Carradine, Jean Seberg, Lee J. Cobb. Mistreated Confederate soldier flees regiment. 99m. (R) Hi \$59.95. Charter.

The Mayfair Bank Caper. 1979. David Niven, Gloria Grahame, Richard Jordan, Elke Sommer. Ex-con placed in securities firm can't resist temptation to crack safe. 110m. \$69.95. VidAmerica.

Miami Vice. 1984. Don Johnson, Philip Michael Thomas, Saundra Santiago. Pilot film for NBC-TV series: New York street cop joins Miami agent in search of cocaine dealer. 99m. LV \$34.95. MCA.

Mighty Joe Young. 1949. B&W. Terry Moore, Ben Johnson, Robert Armstrong. Tamed ape put in degrading nightclub act breaks loose. Effects by Ray Harryhausen, Willis O'Brien. 94m. LV \$34.95. Image.

Naked Vengeance. 1985. Deborah Tranelli, Kaz Garaz, Bill McLaughlin. Woman takes revenge on gang that raped her and murdered her husband, parents. 97m. (unrated) 78m. (R) \$79.95. Lightning.

Policewomen. 1973. Sondra Currie, Tony Young, Phil Hoover. Undercover operation to break gold smuggling ring. 99m. (R) \$59.95. VidAmerica.

The Rainbow Gang. 1973. Donald Pleasence, Kate Reid. Trio of prospectors search for lost mine. 90m. B Hi, V. \$59.95. New World.

Remo Williams: The Adventure Begins. 1985. Fred Ward, Joel Grey, Wilford Brimley, Kate Mulgrew. Fledgling secret agent under tutelage of wry Korean mystic. 121m. (PG-13) Hi St D \$79.95. Thorn.

Renegade Ninjas. 1984. Kensaku Marita. Warrior must avenge father's murder to regain honor. 109m. \$79.95. A.N.E.

Return of the Chinese Boxer. 1974. Jimmy Wong Yu, Lung Fei. Martial arts: Japanese spies sent to China to lay groundwork for invasion. Dubbed. 93m. \$39.95. Unicorn.

Roller Blade. 1986. Suzanne Solari, Jeff Hutchinson. Women warriors rule devastated future world where skateboards are sole means of transport. 88m. B Hi, V \$69.95. New World.

Scott of the Antarctic. 1948. John Mills, Derek Bond, Kenneth More, Christopher Lee. British expedition to South Pole. 110m. \$9.95. Congress.

Shaolin vs. Lama. Martial arts: Kung Fu masters pummel Tibetan monks. 90m. \$39.95. World.

She-Devils on Wheels. Christie Wagner; dir. Herschell Gordon Lewis. Women bikers descend on quiet community. 83m. \$39.95. World.

Showdown at the Equator. 1983. Lo Lieh, Bruce Liang. Martial arts: task force assigned to combat urban crime. 95m. (R) \$59.95. Gems.

Sword and the Dragon. 1958. Soviet hero Ilya Mourometz fights Mongol hordes. Dubbed. 84m. \$9.95. Congress.

Thirty-Six Hours of Hell. 1977. Richard Harrison, Pamela Tudor. Japanese infantry group defends Pacific island against Marine platoon during WWII. 95m. \$59.95. Unicorn.

Toy Soldiers. 1983. Jason Miller, Cleavon Little. Woman trying to free friends imprisoned in South

CASH REGISTER

Special promotions and other pricing news

Music to your ears—that's what Sony hopes you'll think of their \$9.95 list price for select Video 45 titles. Among the crop of 34 cassettes, all initially released at \$16.95, are video compilations by David Bowie, Ashford & Simpson, Elton John, Blotto, Kim Carnes, Duran Duran, J. Geils Band, Rod Stewart, and the Stray Cats.

Parents in search of high-quality animated programs should be delighted with Children's Circle Studios' new \$19.95 pricetag for upcoming and old releases. The former price was \$29.95. CC's catalogue includes the delightful *Really Rosie*, plus a number of multi-story tapes based on classic storybooks.

Magic Window, the kidvid arm of RCA/Columbia, has also cut a cross-section of its inventory to \$19.95. These 26 tapes formerly priced from \$24.95 to \$49.95 include *Pinocchio in Outer Space*, seven anthologies of *Columbia Pictures Cartoons*, and *1001 Arabian Nights* (a UPA feature with Mr. Magoo). Selected future releases will also be sold at the reduced price.

Embassy has repackaged and repriced its *Victory at Sea* series with collectors in mind. The revised edition groups the 26-part TV documentary into 6 mini-features running 120 minutes apiece. The whole shootin' match will now cost \$149.79, down from \$314.55. Individual volumes are also available at \$24.95 each.

If you shop around you may find ■ few leftovers from RCA/Columbia's "Take 20" promotion—\$24.95 could get you Monty Python and the Holy Grail, Taxi Driver, Funny Girl, The Big Chill or Against All Odds, among others.

-Steve Daly

America seeks mercenary's help. 85m. (R) B Hi, V \$69.95. New World.

The Treasure of Jamaica Reef. 1974. Stephen Boyd, Rosie Grier, David Ladd, Cheryl Ladd. Divers compete for sunken galleon, 95m, \$39,95. World.

Uncommon Valor. 1983. Gene Hackman, Robert Stack, Fred Ward, Reb Brown. Retired army officer recruits group of 'Nam vets for mission to find MIAs in Laos. 105m. 8 (price n.a.). Paramount.

The Wild Panther. Martial arts: guerilla fighters clash with spies over military secrets. 90m. \$39.95. World.

The Young Nurses. 1973. Jean Manson, Angela Gibbs, Ashley Porter, Sally Kirkland, Sam Fuller; pr. Roger Corman. Hospital drug ring. 77m. (R) Hi \$59.95. Charter.





CHILDREN'S

The Adventures of Sinbad the Sailor. 1973. anim. Island inhabited by evil demons. 88m. \$59.95. Lightning.

Annie Oakley. 1985. Jamie Lee Curtis, Cliff DeYoung, Brian Dennehy; nar. Shelley Duvall. Installment of Duvall's *Tall Tales & Legends* series: woman sharpshooter. 30m. Hi St cc \$29.98. Playhouse.

Cartoon Fun. 1986 comp. anim. Max Fleischer Studios: Little Lulu, Betty Boop, Raggedy Ann, Casper, Pudgy, Gabby. 40m. \$14.95. Spotlite.

Doctors and Nurses. 1982. Soap opera parody with cast of kids portraying hospital staff. 90m. \$29.95. VidAmerica.

Draw and Color a Cartoony Party with Uncle Fred. 1986. Instruction by comic-strip artist Fred Laswell. 61m. Hi cc \$14.98. Playhouse.

Fraggle Rock Vols. 5-8. 1986. Episodes of cable-TV series created by Jim Henson: underground kingdom inhabited by muppet creatures. Vol. 5: The Preachification of John, Vol. 6: Gobo's School for Explorers, Vol. 7: A Friend in Need, Vol. 8: The Great Radish Caper. 30m. ea. Hi \$24.95 ea. Thorn.

Harvey Cartoon Classics Collection. 1986 comps. anim. Five cas: Casper the Friendly Ghost, Baby Huey the Baby Giant, Playful Little Audrey, Herman and Katnip, Buzzy the Funny Crow. 60m. ea. (except Buzzy, 45m.). \$19.95 ea. Worldvision.

Kidsongs Music Video Stories. 1986. Four sing-along cas., with book of lyrics: A Day at Old Mac-Donald's Farm, Good Night, Sleep Tight, Cars, Boats, Trains and Planes, I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing. 30m. V Hi only. \$9.95. View-Master.

Learning Can Be Fun. 1985. Live action/anim. Sesame Street regular Alaina Reed conducts musical lessons on alphabet, counting, importance of good hygiene, manners, neatness. 30m. Hi cc \$14.98. Playhouse.

Lincoln County Incident. 1980. Comic western starring grade-schoolers. 47m. \$29.95. Vid-America.

Max Fleischer's Popeye Cartoons. 1986. comp. anim. Three technicolor efforts, ca. late '30s. 56m. \$14.95. Spotlite.

Mystery at Castle House. 1982. Children discover secret passageways beneath deserted mansion. 80m. \$29.95. VidAmerica.

The New Three Stoogés. 1965. Live action/anim. Joe DeRita, Moe Howard, Larry Fine. Original Stooges introduce adventures featuring cartoon alter-egos. Four titles: Nutty Nature Lovers, Get That Job!, Funny Fairy Tales, Mild and Wild Animals. 60m. ea. Hi \$14.95 ea. Embassy.

The Phantom Treehouse. 1984. anim. Two children find gateway to fantasy world. 76m. \$29.95. VidAmerica.

Screen Song Sing-Along. 1986 comp. anim. "Follow-the-bouncing-ball" shorts from Max Fleischer Studios. \$14.95. Spotlite.

Shirley Temple Shorts. 1931. B&W. Three sep. cas.: Kid 'n' Hollywood, The Pie-Covered Wagon, Polly Tix in Washington. 25m. ea. \$9.95 ea. Congress.

The Silent One. 1986. Telo Malase. Polynesian boy befriended by white sea turtle. 96m. (PG) \$69.95. VidAmerica.

Starchaser: The Legend of Orin. 1985. anim. Human race enslaved in underground Mineworld. Orig. theatrical release in 3-D. 107m. (PG) Hi St D \$79.95. Paramount.



Airplane! 1980. Robert Hays, Julie Hagerty, Peter Graves, Robert Stack, Lloyd Bridges, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Leslie Nielsen. Take-off on planein-distress movies. 86m. (PG) 8 (price n.a.). Paramount.

The Bad News Bears. 1976. Walter Matthau, Tatum O'Neal, Vic Morrow, Joyce Van Patten. Little League team on losing streak gets hotshot girl pitcher. 102m. 8 (price n.a.). Paramount.

Balkan Express. 1983. Troupe of conmen posing as musicians meet tough challenge—Nazis. 102m. B Hi, V \$59.95. New World.

Beat the Devil. 1954. B&W. Humphrey Bogart, Jennifer Jones, Gina Lollobrigida, Peter Lorre, Robert Morley; dir. John Huston; wr. Huston, Truman Capote. Complications arise in swindlers' scheme. 92m. \$9.95. Congress.

Beginner's Luck. 1984. Sam Rush, Riley Steiner, Kate Talbot. Shy fellow talks neighbors into running sex fantasy service. 85m. (R) B Hi, V \$69.95. New World.

The Best of Comic Relief. 1986. Robin Williams, Whoopi Goldberg, Billy Crystal, others; dir. Walter Miller. With backstage footage not seen on original HBO broadcast. 120m. \$39.95. Karl.

Beverly Hills Cop. 1984. Eddie Murphy, Judge Reinhold, Stephen Elliott, Bronson Pinchot. Street-smart lawman. 105m. (R) 8 St (price n.a.). Paramount.

Carry On Cowboy. 1966. Sid James, Kenneth Williams, Jim Dale, Angela Douglas, Joan Sims.

British parody of *High Noon*. 91m. Hi \$59.95. Thorn,

Casino Royale. 1967. David Niven, Orson Welles, Ursula Andress, Peter Sellers, Deborah Kerr, William Holden, John Huston, Terence Cooper, Barbara Bouchet, Charles Boyer, Woody Allen, Jean-Paul Belmondo, George Raft; dir. Huston, Kenneth Hughes, Robert Parrish, Joseph McGrath, Val Guest. James Bond spoof: 007 lured out of retirement to smash crime group SMERSH. 130m. Hi \$69.95. RCA/Columbia.

Charlie Chaplin—The Early Years, Vols. 1-4. 1986 comp. B&W. Charles Chaplin, Edna Purviance; dir. Chaplin. Chaplin's work at Mutual Studio, 1916-17. Vol. 1: The Immigrant, The Count, Easy Street. Vol. 2: The Pawnshop, The Adventurer, One A.M. Vol. 3: The Cure, The Floorwalker, The Vagabond. Vol. 4: Behind the Screen, The Fireman, The Rink. Approx. 60m. ea. \$29.95 ea. Republic.

Foul Play. 1978. Chevy Chase, Goldie Hawn, Burgess Meredith, Dudley Moore, Rachel Roberts. Comic thriller in Hitchcock vein. 116m. 8 (price n.a.). Paramount.

Generation. 1969. Kim Darby, Peter Duel, David Janssen, Carl Reiner, James Coco, Sam Waterston. Just-married couple determined to deliver their soon-to-arrive baby themselves; girl's father objects. 104m. (PG) Hi \$39.95. Embassy.

A Guide for the Married Man. 1967. Walter Matthau, Robert Morse, Lucille Ball, Carl Reiner, Art Carney, Phil Silvers, Terry-Thomas, Wally Cox, Jayne Mansfield, Sid Caesar, Joey Bishop, Jack Benny, Inger Stevens, Polly Bergen, Hal March, Louis Nye; dir. Gene Kelly. Philandering suburban husband shows neighbor how it's done. 91m. Hi \$59.98. Key.

Harold and Maude. 1972. Ruth Gordon, Bud Cort; wr. Colin Higgins; dir. Hal Ashby. Suicidal young man's relationship with eccentric old woman. 90m. 8 (price n.a.). Paramount.

Hobson's Choice. 1953. Charles Laughton, John Mills, Brenda de Banzie; dir. David Lean. Dictatorial London bootmaker and his daughters, ca. 1890s. 107m. LV \$34.95. Embassy.

I Love My Wife. 1970. Elliott Gould, Brenda Vaccaro, Angel Tompkins, Dabney Coleman. Wife of unfaithful surgeon responds in kind. 98m. (R) Hi D \$59.95. MCA.

I Married a Witch. 1942. B&W. Veronica Lake, Fredric March, Susan Hayward, Robert Benchley; dir. Rene Clair. Woman burned at stake in old Salem returns to haunt descendent of man who condemned her. 77m. LV \$34.95. Lightning.

The Last Remake of Beau Geste. 1977. Marty Feldman, Ann-Margret, Michael York, Peter Ustinov, James Earl Jones, Trevor Howard, Henry Gibson, Terry-Thomas; dir. Feldman. Burlesque of Foreign Legion movies. 85m. (PG) Hi D \$59.95. MCA.

The League of Gentlemen. 1960. B&W. Jack Hawkins, Nigel Patrick, Richard Attenborough. Officer forced to retire from British Army masterminds bank robbery. 114m. \$39.95. Independent.

Mack Sennett Comedies Vols. 1-2. 1986 comp. B&W. Keystone Cops, Mabel Normand, Fatty Arbuckle, Chester Conklin, Ben Turpin. Vintage slapstick. Vol. 1: The Eyes Have It (1928), The Cannon Ball ('15), The Desperate Scoundrel ('16), Pride of Pikeville ('27). Vol. 2: Fatty and Mabel Adrift ('16), Mabel, Fatty and the Law ('15), Fatty's Tin-Type Tangle ('15), Our Congressman ('24; with Will Rogers). 85m. ea. \$29.95 ea. Republic.

Maxie. 1985. Glenn Close, Ruth Gordon, Mandy Patinkin. Spirit of raucous '20s flapper possesses body of mild-mannered '80s secretary. 98m. (PG) Hi \$79.95. Thorn.

My Dinner with Andre. 1981. Andre Gregory, Wallace Shawn; dir. Louis Malle. Writer shares meal with producer friend he hasn't seen in years. 110m. (PG) LV \$34.95. Pacific.

My Other Husband, 1985, Miou-Miou, Rachid Ferrache, Roger Hanin. Frenchwoman's double marriage discovered. 110m. (PG-13) Hi \$59.95. RCA/Colum-

Once Bitten. 1985. Lauren Hutton, Jim Carrey, Cleavon Little. Vampiress determined to drink blood of male virgin. 94m. (PG-13) LV \$34.95. Vestron.

One Night Only. 1984. Lenore Zann, Jeff Braunstein. Hockey team owner hires pimp to organize New Year's orgy. 87m. (R) Hi : \$59.98. Key.

Paddy. 1970. Des Cave, Milo O'Shea, Peggy Cass. Lusty Irishman and his mistresses. 97m. (R) Hi \$59.95. Charter.

Play It Again, Sam. 1972. Woody Allen, Diane Keaton, Tony Roberts; wr. Allen; dir. Herbert Ross. Nebbish having affair with best friend's wife gets advice from imaginary Bogart alter-ego. 87m. 8 (price n.a.). Paramount.

The Ratings Game. 1984. Danny DeVito, Rhea Perlman; dir. De-Vito. New Jersey trucker dreams of becoming Hollywood producer. 102m. cc \$79.95. LV (cav) \$29.95. Paramount.

Screen Test. 1985. Michael Allan Bloom, Robert Bundy, Beautiful women audition for non-existent movie. 84m. (R) LV \$29.95. RCA/Columbia.

The Secret Life of an American Wife. 1968. Walter Matthau, Anne Jackson, Patrick O'Neal. Housewife poses as call girl to prove she's still attractive. 97m. (R) Hi \$59.98. Key.

Steve Martin Live! 1986. Steve Martin, David Letterman, Henny Youngman, Paul Simon, Alan King, Henry Winkler. Martin coaches aspiring comics on their craft using clips from concert performances; sketches include "King Tut," "The Wild and Crazy Guy," "Fun Balloon Animals." Plus The Absent-Minded Waiter, 1977 short with Teri Garr, Buck Henry. 60m. \$59.95. Vestron.

StoogeMania. 1986. Josh Mostel, Melanie Chartoff, Sid Caesar. Man so obsessed with Three Stooges he sees them everywhere (via colorized footage from old shorts). 83m. (PG) Hi \$79.95. Paramount.

Summer Rental. 1985. John Candy, Richard Crenna, Rip Torn: dir. Carl Reiner. Air traffic controller's harried vacaction, 8 (price n.a.). Paramount.

Tammy and the Bachelor, 1957. Debbie Reynolds, Leslie Nielsen, Walter Brennan, Mildred Natwick, Fay Wray. Ingenuous southern girl rescues pilot from plane wreck. 89m. Hi D \$59.95. MCA.

Tammy and the Doctor. 1963. Sandra Dee, Peter Fonda, Reginald Owen. Tammy's troubleprone tenure as nurse's aide. 88m. Hi D \$59.95. MCA.

Teen Wolf. 1985. Michael J. Fox, James Hampton, Susan Ursitti. Highschool basketball star-turned-werewolf. 92m. (PG) 8 St (price n.a.) Paramount.

This Time I'll Make You Rich. 1975. Tony Sabato, Robin McDavid. New York sharpster and brawny farmer dabble in Hong Kong drug market. 105m. (PG) Hi \$59.95. Charter.

Trading Places. 1983. Eddie Murphy, Dan Aykroyd, Jamie Lee Curtis, Ralph Bellamy, Don Ameche; dir. John Landis. Investor bets he can make Wall Street tycoon out of savvy derelict. 106m. 8 (price n.a.) Paramount.

Uphill All the Way. 1985. Roy Clark, Mel Tillis, Glen Campbell, Burl Ives, Trish Van Devere. Pair of western conmen with knack for trouble, 91m. (PG) B Hi, V \$79.95. New World.

A Very Curious Girl. 1969. Bernadette Lafont. Peasant girl used by lecherous men decides to charge them for her attentions. 105m. (R) Hi sub (also dubbed version) \$29.95. Embassy.

The Wackiest Ship in the Army. 1961. Jack Lemmon, Ricky Nelson, Chips Rafferty. Navy commander must train misfit crew for spy mission during WWII. 99m. Hi \$59.95. RCA/Columbia.

Desi Arnaz, Jr., Viveca Lindfors, Dina Merrill, Mia Farrow, Lillian Gish, Howard Duff, Vittorio Gassman, Lauren Hutton, Paul Dooley, Pam Dawber, Dennis Christopher; dir. Robert Altman. Satirical look at politics of matrimony. 125m. (PG) Hi St \$59.98.

Whoopi Goldberg Live. 1985. Goldberg in extended monologue as valley girl, handicapped woman, little girl, male junkie. 75m. LV \$29.95. Vestron.

Your Show of Shows Vol. 7. Ca. 1952. B&W. Sid Caesar, Imogene Coca, Carl Reiner, Howard Morris. Episodes of live '50s TV show, 60m. \$39.95. Unicorn.



Agnes of God. 1985. Anne Bancroft, Meg Tilly, Jane Fonda; dir. Norman Jewison. Court psychiatrist investigates sanity of nun charged with murdering her baby. 99m. (PG-13) LV St CX \$29.95. RCA/Columbia.

And Soon the Darkness, 1980. Pamela Franklin, Sandor Eles.



Girl on bike tour of France disappears at site of recent murder. 94m. (PG) Hi \$59.95. Thorn.

Becky Sharp. 1935. Miriam Hopkins, Cedric Hardwicke, Frances Dee, Billie Burke, Nigel Bruce. Adaptation of Thackeray's *Vanity Fair:* narcissistic young lady. 53m. \$9.95. Congress.

Blade. 1973. John Marley, Joe Santos, John Schuck, Steve Landesburg. Cop on trail of woman-killer. 79m. (PG) \$59.95. Gems.

The Blue Angel. 1929. Marlene Dietrich, Emil Jannings; dir. Josef Von Sternberg. English-language version filmed at same time as German original: professor infatuated with indifferent cabaret singer. \$29.95. Silvermine.

Breakfast in Paris. 1981. Barbara Parkins, Rod Mullinar, Jack Lenoir. Depressed photographer, lonely model make beautiful music together. 85m. B Hi, V \$59.95. New World.

The Chase. 1966. Marlon Brando, Robert Redford, E.G. Marshall, Angie Dickinson, James Fox, Jane Fonda, Robert Duvall; wr. Lillian Hellman; dir. Arthur Penn. Sheriff of small Texas town tracks penitentiary escapee. 135m. Hi \$69.95. RCA/Columbia.

Daisy Miller. 1974. Cybill Shepherd, Barry Brown, Eileen Brennan, Cloris Leachman, Mildred Natwick; dir. Peter Bogdanovich. Adaptation of Henry James novel: scandalous behavior of American woman living abroad in 1800s. 93m. (G) \$59.95. Paramount.

Dark Side of Love. James Stacy, Glynnis O'Connor, Jan Sterling, Mickey Rooney. Runaway dyslexic falls in love with paraplegic. 94m. \$59.95. Gems.

Darling. 1965. B&W. Julie Christie, Laurence Harvey, Dirk Bogarde; dir. John Schlesinger. Englishwoman leaves workingclass husband for series of high-society lovers. 122m. \$39.95. Embassy.

Decameron Nights. 1953. Louis Jourdan, Binnie Barnes, Joan Collins. Full-blooded love stories set in medieval Italy. 87m. \$9.95. Congress.

Dodes'ka-den. 1970. Dir. Akira Kurosawa. Lives, daydreams of Tokyo slum dwellers. 140m. Hi sub \$29.95. Embassy.

Doomwatch. 1972. Ian Bannen, Judy Geeson. Company's use of island as toxic waste dump turns residents into mutants. 90m. Hi \$39.95. Embassy.

Dreamchild. 1985. Coral Browne, Ian Holm, Peter Gallagher. Englishwoman who served as inspiration for Alice in Wonderland comes to grips with unsettling childhood memories. 90m. (PG) Hi \$79.95. Thorn.

Experiment in Terror. 1962. B&W. Lee Remick, Stefanie Powers, Ross Martin, Glenn Ford; dir. Blake Edwards. Criminal kidnaps bank teller's younger sister, instructs her to embezzle ransom money. 123m. Hi \$59.95. RCA/Columbia.

The Head of the Family. 1971. Leslie Caron, Nino Manfredi. Young couple struggle to raise children in postwar Rome. 105m. (PG) \$59.95. Gems.

History Is Made at Night. 1937. B&W. Charles Boyer, Jean Arthur. Woman falls for charming Parisian headwaiter after husband abandons her. 97m. LV \$34.95. Lightning.

The Home and the World. 1984. Victor Banerjee, Swatilekha Chatterjee; dir. Satyajit Ray. Indian woman encouraged by husband to liberalize her political views falls in love with revolutionary leader. 130m. Hi sub. \$39.95. Embassy.

An Indecent Obsession. 1985. Wendy Hughes, Bill Hunter. Romantic intrigue in British veterans' hospital, post-WWII. 100m. \$59.95. Roach.

Investigation. 1981. Victor Lanoux, Valerie Mairesse. Wife resists divorce, winds up murdered. 116m. (R) Hi sub (also dubbed version) \$29.95. Embassy.

Jagged Edge. 1985. Glenn Close, Jeff Bridges, Robert Loggia; dir. Richard Marquand. Attorney has affair with client accused of murdering his wife. 108m. (R) Hi St D ss cc \$79.95. RCA/Columbia.

James Joyce's Women. 1983. Fionnula Flanagan, Timothy E. O'Grady, Chris O'Neill. Account of famed author's relationships with three key women, their effect on his fiction. 91m. (R) Hi D \$69.95, MCA.

Joshua Then and Now. 1985. James Woods, Alan Arkin, Linda Sorensen. Writer's marriage shattered by newspaper article falsely portraying him as homosexual. 102m. (R) Hi \$79.98.

Just Like Us. 1983. Jennifer Jason Leigh, Marion Ross, Carol Lawrence. Rich girl's friendship with daughter of newly hired cook. 55m. \$39.95. Gems.

The Last Winter. 1984. Kathleen Quinlan, Yona Elian. Photo of war prisoner identified by two women, each convinced it is her husband. 92m. (R) Hi \$79.95. RCA/Columbia.

The Lords of Flatbush. 1974. Sylvester Stallone, Henry Winkler, Perry King, Susan Blakely. 1950's Brooklyn teens. 88m. (PG) LV \$29.95. RCA/Columbia.

Murder by Natural Causes. 1979. Hal Holbrook, Katharine Ross, Barry Bostwick, Richard Anderson. Mind-reader target of scheme devised by wife and her lover. 96m. \$59.95. Lightning.

My Old Man. 1979. Kristy McNichol, Warren Oates, Eileen Brennan. Adaptation of Hemingway story: girl reunited with horsetrainer dad after 14 years. 102m. \$69.95. Prism.

My Sweet Charlie. 1969. Patty Duke, Al Freeman, Jr. TV-movie: pregnant white girl shares abandoned house with fugitive black lawyer. 97m. Hi D \$39.95.

Nicholas Nickleby. 1947. B&W. Cedric Hardwicke, Stanley Holloway, Derek Bond, Sally Ann Howes. From the Dickens novel: orphanage teacher battles cruel uncle. 106m. \$9.95. Congress.

The Nightcomers. 1972. Marlon Brando, Stephanie Beacham, Thora Hird. Estate caretaker's brutal sexual relationship with governess. 96m. (R) Hi \$59.95. Charter.

Pandora's Box. 1928. Louise Brooks, Fritz Cortner; dir. G.W. Pabst. Woman's astonishing beauty attracts string of suitors culminating with Jack the Ripper. 110m. Hi St D (silent film, musical accompaniment) sub \$29.95. Embassy.

Power. 1985. Richard Gere, Julie Christie, Gene Hackman, Kate Capshaw, E.G. Marshall, Beatrice Straight; dir. Sidney Lumet. Ruthless media consultant's gallery of political candidates. 111m. (R) \$79.95. Karl.

Premonition. 1971. Carl Crow, Tim Ray, Winfrey Hester Hill; dir. Alan Rudolph. Recurring visions of death. 83m. \$49.95. Active

The President's Mistress. 1978. Beau Bridges, Susan Blanchard,



Larry Hagman, Karen Grassle. She's been murdered. 97m. \$69.95. Lightning.

The Psychic. 1978. Jennifer O'Neill, Marc Porel, Evelyn Stewart. Clairvoyant foresees her own death. 90m. (R) \$69.95. Lightning.

Revolution. 1985. Al Pacino, Nastassja Kinski, Donald Sutherland, Annie Lennox; dir. Hugh Hudson. Da Briddish are comin': Pacino as illiterate trapper caugh' up in American war of independence. 125m. (PG) Hi St cc \$79.95. LV St CX cc \$39.98. Warner.

Sapphire. 1959. Nigel Patrick, Yvonne Mitchell, Michael Craig. Search for murderer of black girl who passed as white. 92m. \$39.95. Independent.

Simba. 1955. Dirk Bogarde, Virginia McKenna. British commander arrives in Kenya to find brother killed by Mau Maus. 99m. \$39.95. Independent.

A Song to Remember. 1945. Cornel Wilde, Paul Muni, Merle Oberon. Hollywood bio of Chopin, with Oberon as lover George Sand. 112m. Hi \$59.95. RCA/Columbia.

The Specialist. 1975. Adam West, Ahna Capri. Unscrupulous prosecuting attorney. 93m. (R) \$59.95. VidAmerica.

Suddenly. 1954. B&W. Frank Sinatra, Sterling Hayden. Plot to assassinate President. 75m. \$9.95. Congress.

That Was Then...This Is Now. 1985. Emilio Estevez, Craig Sheffer, Kim Delaney, Barbara Babcock. Teen friendship. 102m. (R) Hi St cc \$79.95. Paramount.

Title Shot. 1981. Tony Curtis, Richard Gabourie, Susan Hogan. Heavyweight manager bets against his client. 88m. (R) \$69.95. Lightning.

Ugetsu. 1953. B&W. Dir. Kenji Mizoguchi. Two peasants in feudal Japan abandon families to seek war spoils. 96m. Hi sub. (also dubbed version) \$29.95. Embassy.

Victim. 1961. B&W. Dirk Bogarde, Sylvia Sims. Homosexual lawyer faces exposure by blackmailers. 100m. \$39.95. Independent.

Wagner. 1983. Richard Burton, Vanessa Redgrave, John Gielgud, Ralph Richardson, Laurence Olivier, Marthe Keller. Musical and political careers of German composer. 300m. (double cas.) Hi St D \$79.95. Embassy.

Witness. 1985. Harrison Ford, Kelly McGillis; dir. Peter Weir. Urban detective goes undercover in Amish village to protect boy who saw shooting. 112m. (R) 8 St (price n.a.). LV St CX cc \$29.95. Paramount.

The World Is Full of Married Men. 1980. Anthony Franciosa, Carroll Baker. Unfaithful husband, philandering wife. 106m. (R) Hi \$59.98. Key.

Young Winston. 1972. Simon Ward, Robert Shaw, Anne Bancroft, John Mills, Jack Hawkins; dir. Richard Attenborough. Early military and political career of Churchill. 124m. (PG) Hi \$59.95. RCA/Columbia.



The Appointment. 1987. Edward Woodward, Jane Merrow. Father and daughter possessed. 90m. \$39.95. Sony.

The Asphyx. 1972. Robert Stephens, Robert Powell, Jane Lapotaire. Photo of public hanging reveals death spirit. 96m. (PG) \$59.95. Magnum.

Big Foot. Chris Mitchum, Joi Lansing, John Carradine, John Mitchum. Colony of snow creatures plan to mate with captured humans. 94m. \$39.95. World.

The Blood Castle. Burnt corpse reanimated. \$69.95. Wizard.

Blood Orgy of the She-Devils. Lila Zaborin, Tom Pace. Witches raise ruckus during visit to hell. 73m. (PG) \$49.95. World.

The Body Snatcher. 1945. B&W. Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi, Henry Daniell; dir. Robert Wise. Doctor in need of bodies for research hires grave-robber. 77m. LV \$29.95. Image.

Brain of Blood. 1971. Grant Williams, Kent Taylor. Politician retains mad doctor to perform brain transplant, awakens inside body of deformed village idiot. 107m. (PG) \$49.95. Magnum.

Breeders. 1986. Made-for-video tale of alien invaders who repro-



duce in spectacularly gruesome manner. \$69.95. Wizard.

Cat People. 1942. B&W. Simone Simon, Kent Smith, Tom Conway; dir. Jacques Tourneur. Ancient curse turns woman into panther. 73m. LV \$29.95. Image.

Circus of Fear. 1967. Christopher Lee, Leo Genn, Klaus Kinski; intro by John Carradine. Restored version of British thriller (released in U.S. as Psycho-Circus) about big top plagued by series of violent murders. 91m. \$29.95. Silvermine.

The Clonus Horror. 1979. Timothy Donnelly, Keenan Wynn, Peter Graves. Research center where unsuspecting volunteers are frozen alive, then replicated. 90m. \$69.95. Lightning.

Curse of the Cat People. 1944. B&W. Simone Simon, Kent Smith, Jane Randolph. Young girl has strange visions of father's first wife. 70m. LV \$29.95. Image.

Dr. Frankenstein's Castle of Freaks. 1974. Rossano Brazzi, Michael Dunn. Slain neanderthal resurrected. 87m. (PG) \$49.95. Magnum.

Escapes. 1986. Jerry Grisham, Lee Canefied, host Vincent Price. Five shocking tales made-for-video. 72m. \$79.95. Prism.

Evils of the Night. 1984. John Carradine, Julie Newmar, Tina Louise, Aldo Ray. Aliens snatch teen campers with intention of eating them alive. 85m. \$69.95. Lightning.

Gator Bait. 1976. Claudia Jennings, Sam Gilman. Men lust after swamp girl; end up badly. 93m. \$39.95. Independent.

God Told Me To. 1977. Tony Lo Bianco, Sandy Dennis, Sylvia Sidney. Possessed killers insist they acted on divine directive. 91m. (R) Hi \$59.95. Charter.

House of Death. Susan Kiger, Jennifer Chase, Jody Kay. Last sounds uttered by machete killer's victims. 88m. (R) \$59.95. Gems.

The Mad Butcher. 1975. Victor Buono, Brad Harris, Karen Field. Viennese meatseller introduces exceptionally tasty sausages as police begin search for missing girls. 90m. (R) \$59.95. Magnum.

Mad Doctor of Blood Island. 1969. John Ashley. Scientist's assistant accidentally turned into green-eyed monster. 110m. (PG) \$49.95. Magnum.

The Mummy's Revenge. 1953. Paul Naschy, Jack Taylor. Ancient pharaoh awakened by blood cocktail. Dubbed: 91m. \$49.95. Unicorn.

Murders in the Rue Morgue. 1971. Jason Robards, Lilli Palmer, Herbert Lom. Adaptation of Poe story: horror-theatre's actors are real-life murder victims. 87m. (PG) \$59.95. Lightning.

Night Train to Terror. 1986. John Phillip Law, Cameron Mitchell, Charles Moll. Good and Evil board train to argue fate of errant passengers. 98m. (R) \$79.95. Prism

Planet of the Vampires. 1965. Barry Sullivan, Norman Bengell. Body-snatching aliens. 86m. Hi \$59.95. Thorn.

The Possessor. Medallion drives owner to murder. \$69.95. Wizard.

Scream Greats Vol. 1. 1986. Profile of gore effects whiz Tom Savini; clips from Friday the 13th, Dawn of the Dead, more. 52m. Hi St \$59.95. LV (cav) St \$29.95. Paramount.

The Screaming Dead. Small German village suffers new monster. \$69.95. Wizard.

The Seventh Victim. 1943. B&W. Tom Conway, Kim Hunter. Manhattan devil-worship cult. 70m. LV \$29.95. Image.

Silver Bullet. 1985. Gary Busey, Everett McGill, Corey Haim. Werewolf terrorizes small town. (R) LV \$29.95. Paramount.

Torture Chamber of Dr. Sadism. 1969. Christopher Lee, Karin Dor. Resurrected Transylvanian count continues his fiendish pastimes. 120m. (PG) \$59.95. Magnum.



Advanced Photography. 1986. Kodak series on professional technique includes Action Photography, Advanced Existing Light Photography, Nature Photography, Scenic Photography, Images with Imagination, Glamour Photography with Peter Gowland. Approx. 30m ea. \$19.99 ea. SON.

Baedeker's Guide to Thoroughbred Racing. 1986. Handicap authority Bud Baedeker offers tips on betting the horses. 120m. \$49.95. BCV.

The Best of Square Foot Gardening Vols. 1-3. 1986. Author/TV host Mel Bartholomew illustrates creation and care of compact gardens. 60m. ea. \$19.99 ea. SQN.

Consumer Reports Videos. 1986. First two tapes in product information/evaluation series: Home Safe Home, Cars—How to Buy a New or Used Car and Keep It Running Almost Forever. 50m. ea. \$19.95 ea. Karl.

Dick Sutphen's No Effort Weight Loss Video. 1986. Hypnotist Sutphen narrates program infused with positive (and potentially hunger-curbing) subliminal messages. 20m. \$19.95. United.

Exploring Photography. 1986. Multi-cas. tutorial from Kodak aimed at 35mm shutterbugs: Introduction to Photography, Basic Picture-Taking Techniques, The Art of Photo Composition, Effective Use of Lenses, Existing-Light Photography, Imaginative Use of Filters, The Language of Light, Photographers and the Films They Choose, Photography People, Prize-Winning Pictures, Using Flash, Action Photography. Approx. 30m. ea. \$19.99 ea. SQN.

Made Easy Series. 1986. Instructional programs for the do-it-yourself home repairman: Electrical Made Easy, Plumbing Made Easy, Paint and Paper Made Easy, Safe and Warm Made Easy, Ready to Remodel Made Easy, with illustrated booklets. 25m. ea. \$9.95 ea. Karl.

Parents Video Magazine. 1986. Three cas. guide to raising toddlers: Baby Comes Home, Meeting the World, Learning About the World. 55m. ea. \$19.95 ea. Karl.

Reach for Fitness. 1986. Richard Simmons leads exercises aimed at the handicapped. Cameos by Linda Evans, Jane Fonda, Bruce Jenner, Alex Karras, Ann-Margret, Joan Rivers, John Ritter, Cybill Shepherd, Alan Thicke, Betty White, others. 45m. \$14.95. Karl.

Barbra Streisand: Putting it Together





Sushi at Home. 1986. Preparation of raw-fish dishes. 50m. \$29.95. Increase.



Harry Belafonte: Don't Stop the Carnival. 1985. Concert performance includes "Banana Boat," "Matilda." Plus commentary by Bill Cosby, Alan King, others. 60m. \$29.95. Thorn.

Bon Jovi—Breakout. 1985. Heavy metal group videos: "Silent Night," "Only Lonely," more. 23m. LV St CX \$12.99. Pioneer.

Dick Clark's Best of Bandstand. 1986 comp First tape in series culled from American Bandstand TV show. Appearances by Bill Haley, Buddy Holly, Sam Cooke, Jerry Lee Lewis, others. 60m. Hi St \$29.95. Vestron.

Flashdance. 1983. Jennifer Beals, Michael Nouri. A welder by day, sexy dancer by night dreams of being a ballerina. 96m. 8 St (price n.a.). Paramount.

Footloose. 1984. Kevin Bacon, Lori Singer, John Lithgow, Dianne Wiest; dir. Herbert Ross. Small-town minister declares war on rock 'n' roll. 107m. 8 St (price n.a.). Paramount.

Fuel for Life. 1986 comp. of rock videos by heavy metal band Judas Priest: "Locked In," "Turbo Lover," "Breaking the Law," more. 40m. Hi St \$19.98, CBS/Pox.

Greenpeace Non-Toxic Video Hits. 1986. Videos by Peter Gabriel ("Shock the Monkey"), Madness ("On the Wings of a Dove"), George Harrison ("Save the World"), others. 59m. LV St CX \$29.95. Vestron.

Hear 'N' Aid. 1986. Documentary on recording of benefit record by members of heavy metal groups

King Kobra, Dokken, Quiet Riot, WASP, Ted Nugent, others. 30m. \$16.95. Sony.

Imagine. 1971. John Lennon, Yoko Ono. Rarely-screened film features visualizations of songs from Lennon's Imagine album, Yoko's Fly. 60m. \$29.95. Sony.

The Jazz Singer. 1980. Neil Diamond, Laurence Olivier, Lucie Arnaz. Story of musician's rise. 115m. 8 St (price n.a.). Paramount.

Julius Caesar. 1986. John Copley's production of the Handel opera, recorded in '84 at Limehouse Studios, London. With Dame Janet Baker, Valerie Masterson; cond. Charles Mackerras. 220m. (double cas.) Hi St \$39.95. Thorn.

Kyoto Vivaldi: The Four Seasons. 1986. Baroque classic as performed by Koto Ensemble, set to lyrical images of Kyoto, Japan. 45m. Hi St \$29.95. Sony.

John Lennon Live in New York City. 1986. Lennon's Madison Square Garden benefit concert, filmed August 30, 1972. With Yoko Ono and the Plastic Ono Elephant's Memory Band. Includes "Power to the People," "Instant Karma," "Imagine," more. 60m. LV St CX \$24.95. Pioneer.

Huey Lewis and the News: The Heart of Rock 'n' Roll. 1985. Concert recorded at San Francisco's Kabuki Theater. Includes "Heart and Soul," "If This Is It," more. 53m. LV St CX \$24.95. Pioneer.

Yumi Matsutoya: Train of Thought. 1986. Japanese actress/singer in pop-rock conceptual videos. 58m. Hi St \$29.95. Sony.

The Nashville Story. 1986. Documentary on country music capital. Performances by Dolly Parton, Minnie Pearl, Roy Acuff, Ernest Tubb, Hank Snow, others. 70m. Hi St \$39.95. Country.

Never Steal Anything Small. 1958. James Cagney, Shirley Jones, Jack Albertson. Crooked longshoreman out to win union presidency. 94m. Hi \$59.95. MCA.

Peter Grimes. 1986. Performance of Benjamin Britten's opera recorded in '81 at London's Royal Opera House. With Jon Vickers, Heather Harper; cond. Colin Davis. 90m. Hi St \$39.95. Thorn.

Romeo and Juliet. 1986. Performance of the ballet recorded in '82 at LaScala, Milan. Featuring Rudolph Nureyev, Margot Fonteyn, Carla Fracci. 128m. Hi St \$79.95. Kultur.

Say Amen, Somebody. 1982. Documentary on gospel music culminating in church tribute to reigning greats Thomas Dorsey, Willie Mae Ford Smith. 100m. LV \$34.95. Pacific.

Bobby Short and Friends (Live at the Carlyle). 1986. Famed cafe entertainer recorded in '82 at Manhattan's Cafe Carlyle. With Jack Lemmon, Lucie Arnaz; songs include "I Get a Kick Out of You," "Let's Misbehave," "All of You," more. 60m. Hi St D \$29.95. MGM/UA.

Rick Springfield—The Beat of the Live Drum. 1985. Footage from '84 concert tour, plus videos. Songs include "Affair of the Heart," "Jessie's Girl," more. 75m. LV St CX \$24.95. Pioneer.

The Rod Stewart Concert Video. 1986. Interviews, footage of Stewart's early days with Faces, plus highlights of '84 concert tour. 80m. Hi St \$29.95. Karl.

Barbra Streisand: Putting It Together—The Making of "The Broadway Album." 1986. Document of recording session; songs include "If I Loved You," "Somewhere." Hi St \$29.98. LV St CX \$29.98. CBS/Fox.

Sweet Country Road. 1981. Buddy Knox, Kary Lynn, Gordie Tapp. Account of fictional rock-and-roller's crossover to country. 95m. B Hi, V \$59.95. New World.

Tannhauser. 1986. Performance of Wagner's opera recorded live at the Metropolitan, December, 1982. With Richard Cassilly, Eva Marton, Tatiana Troyanos; cond. James Levine. 176m. LV (double disc) St CX sub \$49.95. Pioneer.

Wild Style. 1983. Lee Quinones, Sandra Fabara, Grandmaster :

Flash. Breakdancers. 82m. \$49.95. World.



Cocoon. 1985. Wilford Brimley, Brian Dennehy, Steve Guttenberg, Tahnee Welch, Don Ameche, Hume Cronyn, Jessica Tandy, Gwen Verdon, Jack Gilford, Maureen Stapleton; dr. Ron Howard. Nursing home residents discover storehouse of alien pods. 117m. (PG-13) LV St CX \$34.98. CBS/Fox.

Fantastic Planet. 1973. anim. Planet where humans are kept as pets. 72m. (PG) \$9.95. Congress.

My Science Project. 1985. John Stockwell, Danielle von Zereck, Dennis Hopper. High school senior develops time-altering device. (PG) LV \$34.95. Touchstone. (Disney).

The Sea Serpent. 1985. Timothy Bottoms, Ray Milland, Jared Martin. Captain trying to prove title creature exists. 92m. \$69.95. Lightning.

Star Trek III: The Search for Spock. 1984. William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, DeForest Kelley; dir. Nimoy. Kirk and crew return to Vulcan in hope of saving Spock's soul from oblivion. 105m. 8 St (price n.a.). Paramount.

Troll. 1986. Shelley Hack, Michael Moriarty, Sonny Bono, June Lockhart. Beast transforms residents of apartment complex into creatures more like himself. 86m. (PG-13) Hi St \$79.95. Vestron.

Zone Troopers. 1985. Timothy Van Patten, Tim Thomerson. WWII G.I.s find survivor in wreckage of alien spacecraft. 86m. (PG) \$79.95. Lightning.



The Baseball Bunch. 1986. Instruction for youngsters from Johnny Bench, other Major League stars. Three cas. Hitting, Fielding, Pitching. 60m. ea. \$19.95 ea. Scholastic. (Karl).

The Baseball Masters. 1986. Pointers from the pros: *Hitting* with Al Kaline, George Kell; *Pitching* with Jerry Koosman. 25m. ea. \$9.95 ea. Congress.

Fishing with Jimmy Houston Vols. 1, 2. 1986. Jimmy battles 13-pound bass, 40-pound salmon; offers tips on casting, crankbaits, worm fishing. Approx. 60m. ea. \$29.95 ea. United.

Jimmy Houston's Guide to Bass Fishin'. 1986. Down-home helpful hints. 60m. \$29.95. United.

The 1985 Gillette NFL Most Valuable Player. 1986. Clips of year's top six footballers (and single winner) in action: Dan Marino, Louis Lipps, Mike Singletary, Joe Morris, Roger Craig, Marcus Allen. 23m. \$24.95. NFL.

1985 Team Highlights. 1986. Football comps. With coach and player interviews. Five tapes: Dallas Cowboys: The Winning of the East, Los Angeles Raiders: Year of Glory, Miami Dolphins: Fight to the Finish, San Francisco: Never Surrender, New England Patriots. 23m. ea. \$24.95 ea. NFL.

One-On-One with Roland Martin. 1986. Techniques for improved angler fishing. 60m. \$29.95. United.

Super Bears: Highlights of Super Bowl XX. 1986. In-depth analysis of Bears' 46-10 trouncing of New England Patriots. 23m. \$24.95. NFL.

Super Star Wrestling Vols. 9-18. 1986. Match highlights, interviews. Featuring Butch Reed vs. Dick Slater (Vol. 9). The Bruise Brothers (Vol. 11), Bunkhouse Battle Royale (Vol. 13), Humongous (Vol. 14), others. 30m. ea. \$9.95 ea. Congress.

WrestleMania 2. 1986. Matches featuring Hulk Hogan vs. King Kong Bundy, Mr. T vs. Rowdy Roddy Piper, 20-man free-for-all with William "Refrigerator" Perry, Andre the Giant, Big John Studd. 120m. \$39.95. Coliseum.

Marilyn:
Say Goodbye to the President



AIDS: Profile of an Epidemic—Update. 1986. WNET-TV documentary with postscript produced for video: origins, effects of fatal disease, profiles of five patients. 60m. \$29.95. MPL

Backstage at the Kirov. 1983. A look at professional and personal lives of Russian ballet company. 80m. LV \$34.95. Pacific.

Cougar Country. Nar. Michael Rye. Wildlife feature following development of young cougar over two-year period. 91m. (G) \$19.95. United.

Cry of the Wild. 1972. Nar. Pat Crawley; photographed by Bill Mason. Mating and hunting habits of wolves. 87m. (G) \$19.95. United.

D-Day Plus 40 Years. 1984. Color/B&W. Tom Brokaw hosts NBC News program commemorating anniversary of Allied invasion into Normandy. 52m. Hi \$24.95. Embassy.

For Love of Liberty. 1986. Made-for-video program detailing Statue of Liberty's history. \$14.95. Star.

James Cagney: That Yankee Doodle Dandy. 1981. Nar. Treat Williams; wr./dir. Richard Schickel. Appreciation includes interviews with Cagney, Milos Forman. Pat O'Brien, Donald O'Connor, numerous clips. 73m. Hi \$29.95.



Le Louvre. 1986. Paris art museum. 55m. \$99.95. Gessler.

Love Celebration Trilogy. 1986 comp. Colorized. Pioneering TV personality Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen in inspirational programming culled from his original broadcasts: Love Is a Many Splendored Thing, The Touch of Your Hand, Love Is a Garden. 30m. ea. \$29.95 ea./\$84.95 for set (plus \$5 for mail orders). Sheen.

Marilyn: Say Goodbye to the **President.** 1986. British TV documentary exploring possibility Monroe was murdered. 71m. Hi cc \$59.98. Key.

Natalia Makarova: In a Class of Her Own. 1985. Prima ballerina at work with Russian teacher Irina Yakobsen, rehearsing and performing Petit's ballet *The Blue* Angel. 53m. Hi \$49.95. VAL.

Of Sharks and Men. Documentary on former's sometimes spirited pursuit of latter. \$19.95. United.

Paris. 1986. Travelogue of city's sights, including Notre Dame Cathedral, Eiffel Tower, Tuilleries gardens. 55m. \$99.95. Gessler.

Playboy Video Centerfold Vol. 2. 1986. Playmate Teri Weigel's thoughts on life in Los Angeles and other weighty subjects. 20m. \$9.95. Karl.

Playboy Video Magazine Vol. 9. 1986. Interview with Barbi Benton, short film City Boy by Bob Giraldi, portrait of Playmate of the Year, more. 80m. \$39.95. Karl.

The Prince and Princess of Wales...Talking Personally. 1986. Charles and Diana chat with British journalist Sir Alastair Burnet. 45m. \$29.95. Vestron.

The Statue of Liberty. 1984. Nar. David McCullough. Story of statue's design and construction. With voice-over readings by De-

rek Jacobi, Jeremy Irons, Arthur Miller, Milos Forman; commentary by Jerzy Kosinski, Ray Charles, New York Governor Mario Cuomo. 60m. \$24.95. Vestron.

Travel the World. 1986. Travelogue series: The Alps, Canada, Greece, China. Approx. 30m. ea. \$19.99 ea. SQN.

Versailles. 1986. Tour of the palace's grounds and interior. 55m. \$99.95. Gessler.

World Salari. Big game in the jungles of India, Uganda; elephants along the Nile; wildlife of Alaskan tundra. 93m. (G) \$19.95. United.

SOURCES

A&H Video Sales, 430 W. 54th St., New York, N.Y. 10019 (212-489-8130).

Active Home Video, 211 S. Beverly Dr., Beverly Hills, Calif. 90212 (213-850-1757).

A.N.E. Home Video: see Prism.

BCV Productions, P.O. Box 10325, Newport Beach, Calif. 92658 (1-800-341-RACE; in Calif. 1-800-241-RACE).

CBS/Fox Video, 1211 Sixth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10036 (212-819-3200).

CC Studios, 389 Newtown Tpke., Weston, Conn. 06883 (203-266-4666, 800-243-5020).

Charter Entertainment: see **Embassy**.

Coliseum Video: see A&H.

Congress Video Group, 4520 Beech St., Cincinnati, Ohio 45212 (513-351-5577, 1-800-VHS-TAPE).

Country Video USA, 409 N. Figueroa, Wilmington, Calif. 90744 (213-513-1426).

Embassy Home Entertainment, 1901 Ave. of the Stars, Los Angeles, Calif. 90067 (213-553-3600).

Video *Gems*, 731 N. LaBrea Ave., Box 38188, Los Angeles, Calif. 90038 (213-938-2385).

Gessler Educational Software, 900 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10003 (212-673-3113).

Image Entertainment, 6311 Romaine St., Hollywood, Calif. 90038 (213-468-8867, 800-421-4585).

Increase Video, 8265 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90046 (213-654-8808).

Independent United Distributors: see **A&H**.

Karl/Lorimar Home Video, 17942 Cowan Ave., Irvine, Calif. 92714 (714-474-0355).

Key Video: see CBS/Fox.

Kultur International Films, Ltd., 121 Hwy. 36, West Long Branch, N.J. 07764 (201-229-2343).

Lightning Video: see Vestron.

Magnum Entertainment Inc., 9301 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 602, Beverly Hills, Calif. 90212 (213-278-9981, 800-MAG-NUM 8).

MCA Home Video, 70 Universal City Plaza, Universal City, Calif. 91608 (818-508-4315).

MGM/UA Home Video, 1350 Sixth Ave. New York, N.Y. 10019 (212-408-0600).

MPI Home Video, 15825 Rob Roy Dr., Oak Forest, Ill. 60452 (312-687-7881).

New World Video, 1440 S. Sepulveda Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90025 (213-444-8100).

NFL Films Video, 330 Fellowship Rd., Mt. Laurel, N.J. 08054 (609-778-1600, 800-NFL-TAPE).

Pacific Arts Video, 50 N. La Cienega Blvd., Suite 210, Beverly Hills, Calif. 90211 (213-657-2233).

Paramount Home Video, 5555 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles, Calif. 90038-3197 (213-468-5000).

Pioneer Artists, 200 W. Grand Ave., Montvale, N.J. 07645 (201-573-1122).

Playhouse Video: see CBS/Fox.

Prism Entertainment, 1875 Century Park East, Los Angeles, Calif. 90067 (213-277-3270).

RCA/Columbia Pictures Home Video, 2901 W. Alameda Ave., Burbank, Calif. 91505 (818-906-1722, 818-954-4950).

Republic Pictures Home Video, 12636 Beatrice St., Box 66930, Los Angeles, Calif. 90066-0930 (213-306-4040).

Hal **Roach** Studio Films Classics, 1600 N. Fairfax Ave., Hollywood, Calif. 90046 (213-850-0525).

Fulton J. Sheen Communications, 19355 Business Ctr. Dr., Northridge, Calif. 91324 (818-885-1044).

Silvermine Video, 6914 Canby St., Suite 110, Reseda, Calif. 91335 (818-342-2880).

Sony Video Software, 9 W. 57th St., New York, N.Y. 10019 (212-371-5800, 800-847-4164).

Spotlite Video: see Republic.

SQN Corp., 27 Dryden Lane, Providence, R.I. 02904 (401-521-2010).

Star Classics, 4223 Glenwood Rd., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11210 (718-434-1100).

Thorn EMI/HBO Video, 1370 Sixth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019 (212-977-8990).

Unicorn Video, 20822 Dearborn St., Chatsworth, Calif. 91311 (818-407-1333).

United Home Video, 6535 E. Skelly Dr., Tulsa, Okla. 74145 (918-622-6460, 800-331-4077).

Video Arts International, Box 153, Ansonia Sta., New York, N.Y. 10023 (212-799-7798).

Vestron Video, 1011 High Ridge Rd., Box 4000, Stamford, Conn. 06907 (213-968-0000).

VidAmerica, 235 E. 55th St., New York, N.Y. 10022 (212-355-1600).

View-Master International Group, P.O. Box 490, Portland, Ore. 97207 (503-644-1181).

Warner Home Video, 4000 Warner Blvd., Burbank, Calif. 91522 (818-954-6000).

Wizard Video: see Vestron.

World Video Pictures, 12401 Wilshire Blvd. 102, Los Angeles, Calif. 90025 (213-820-6100).

Worldvision Home Video, 660 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10021 (212-832-3838).

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August 1986

Panasonic PV-300 Full-Sized VHS HQ Camcorder
Sony EV-S700 8mm Table Model VCR with PCM Sound

Panasonic PV-1742 Deluxe VHS HQ VCR

Vidicraft SEG-200 Special Effects Generator



Panasonic PV-300 VHS HQ Camcorder

Panasonic VHS HQ Camcorder



Panasonic is now offering its third generation Omni-Movie, a fullsized VHS camcorder that also plays tapes. The new PV-300 is lighter

and more compact—improvements we have come to expect as signs of progress.

Full-sized VHS camcorders are still about three pounds heavier than Compact VHS (VHS-C) models. But they have greater capacity at the SP speed and do not need mechanical adapters to play tapes on a VHS table model. Best of all, the same machine can play prerecorded tapes if you tire of watching reruns of your summer vacation. The PV-300 has High Quality circuitry (HQ) and uses a CCD solid-state 94 Video August 1986

image sensor that yields good pictures at 7 lux. One major design change is that the cassette hatch now opens away from your face. There are others: the viewfinder swings forward for easy storage and carrying, the sliding cover for the VCR controls is actually the camera/VCR switch, and the camcorder is organized more like a top-grade camera than a camcorder. The result is a device that is easier to operate and more comfortable on your shoulder.

To add polish to your productions, it offers fade-in/fade-out, backlight compensation, and automatic white balance (though it can switch to manual). A clock records time and date information, and an optional character generator adds titles as you shoot.

Description. The PV-300 is black with a few touches of color. It is close to its predecessors in size but more streamlined and, at 5.6 lbs. without battery, 12 ounces lighter. Its battery is interchangeable with the previous model. You must shoot right handed, but the electronic viewfinder

(EVF) can be positioned for your left eye.

Most of the controls are on the top. A rotary tracking control (playback only) is on the side of the handle near your face. Further back are a spring-loaded slider for power, buttons for counter reset, memory display, the time/date setting, and eject.

Behind the handle is the sliding camera/VCR switch. When covering the transport buttons, it puts the camcorder in record/pause and activates the run/pause button on the grip. Sliding it aside activates the transport buttons.

In the compartment are buttons for record, rewind, play, and fast forward, audio dub, stop, and pause/still. Also on top are the handle, the accessory shoe, an eyelet for the carrying strap, and the microphone. The removeable, swinging EVF attaches over the lens cowl. A release on the cowl lets you adjust the EVF.

Most remaining controls are on the side of the camera cowl nearest your face. In the top row are buttons for fade and backlight. Lower down are buttons for standby and record review. Below are switches with silver stripes that form a broken line with similar stripes on the panel. When the stripes are aligned, the camcorder is fully automatic.

The forward switch is for auto focus. In manual, you can still get one-shot auto focus by pressing the switch handle. The second switch is for date/time, with the center position offering a clear frame. Moving the handle below the line records the date; above the line, the date and time. The last switch delivers auto white balance at center position, fixed white balance for artificial light below the line, and fixed balance for outdoor sunlight above the line.

The shell houses the cassette hatch with a tiny window. Further forward on the lens cowl are the EVF jack, the handgrip with its safety strap, the run/pause button, and a zoom. Ridges make for a comfortable hold.





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For additional information.

On the lens beside the handgrip are the manual focus and zoom rings, with the stubby zoom lever sporting a macro release. Windows for white balance and infrared auto-focus sensors are on the front of the grip and the lens support.

The bottom hosts a threaded tripod mounting hole, a compartment for the clock batteries, and a non-skid shoulder rest. The back has a battery compartment and release, the other shoulder strap evelet, and jacks for an earphone, an external microphone, and a multipin audio/video/power connector.

The supplied AC adapter plugs into the a/v/power connector for charging the internal battery, breaking out the audio and video inputs, providing RF output, and switching and input switching between camera and line. It can also charge an external battery.

It charges either battery separately in about 100 minutes and both together in 200 minutes. The supplied battery powers the camcorder for about two hours. The adaptor has indicators for power and charging. The supplied case has compartments for the camcorder, the charger, a cassette, a battery, and accessories if you pack care-

Operation. The PV-300 fits more comfortably on your shoulder than the earlier model. The controls are more accessible because the surface is smoother. Even though there are more controls and features you can operate the camcorder easily. Panasonic gets an excellent rating on this redesign for ease of operation. No quirks. No hidden gotchas.

Performance. Panasonic resisted the lure of solid-state image sensors until it could offer one as sensitive as its tubes. The PV-300's sensor delivers 50 IRE (half normal contrast) pictures at 7 lux. One difference between this and other cameras and camcorders we've measured is that the relative brightness levels of the steps on our test chart were more even. It also holds color quite well at low levels.

The camera delivers 300 lines of horizontal resolution if you view its output directly, but the recorder delivers just 250 lines, like other VHS HQ machines. The HQ circuitry makes the edges of objects (especially in low light) less ragged.

Video S/N was measured as 43.6 decibels, unweighted, and 46.4 dB, weighted; chroma AM S/N was 44 dB, and chroma PM S/N was 39.7 dB. We rate its picture as excellent even though we have seen a few better chroma noise measurements.

On audio the camcorder is at its weakest. But even that is very good compared to typical VHS linear track performance. Its frequency response is 100 to 10,500 Hertz, -1.7/3 dB with an audio S/N of 42 dB and total harmonic distortion of 2.1 percent.

Its new audio dub lets you replace the audio track with music or narration to cov-

er those flubs that always seem to plague home-made tapes. So it's no slouch on audio. Tapes made at LP or SLP will play on this machine, but the picture may be snowy and the audio irregular.

Conclusion. Even with just a very good rating on audio Panasonic's PV300 gets raves from us. The fullsized VHS format lets you play prerecorded tapes so you don't have to lug two machines around. The HQ circuitry produces less noisy pictures with crisp edges, and its low light sensitivity is competitive with the best separates. The only thing missing is Hi-Fi audio. That's where 8mm leads the other formats. But for home taping who really needs the dog's bark in Hi-Fi?

The perfect video gear is still on the drawing boards, but the PV-300 is among the top contenders on the market. It carries a stiff \$2000 suggested price, including the hard case and accessories. Don't let it frighten you. The street price is sure to be lower, and you may find it is exactly what you've been looking for. We strongly recommend you see it if you're in the market for a camcorder.

Test Report: Panasonic PV300 'OmniMovie' Full-**Sized VHS HQ Camcorder**

DATA

Date of test: May 1986 Suggested retail price: \$2000 including all supplied accessories

Weight: 5.6 pounds with handle but without battery; 1.32 pounds, battery **Dimensions:** 8-11/16 x 4-9/16 x 14-15/16

inches (h x w x d)

Power requirements: 12 V DC Power consumption: 14 W

Image sensor: CCD (solid-state) **Lens:** f1.2, 6X (8.5-68 mm) power zoom with macro range

Filter diameter: 49 mm

Minimum focusing distance: 1.2 m, about 4 feet, not including macro range Minimum illumination: 6 lux for 50 IRE units (50% contrast range), measured; 7 lux, rated

Auto focus: IR type, switchable to manu-

White balance: automatic; switchable to fixed indoor and fixed outdoor settings Iris: automatic with spring loaded Backlight button

Sensitivity: single continuous range Viewfinder: electronic; 2/3-inch B&W screen with indicators for battery condition, tape counter, counter memory, date (recordable), time (recordable), low light, tape ending, and dew; plus discrete LED indicators for fixed white balance operation (red), and recorder taping (green) Viewfinder controls: optical focus slid-

er, and screwdriver controls for brightness and electrical focus (factory set)

Auto fade: ves: hold down for fade out. hold down before release of pause and then release for fade in

VCR controls: all, unified Microphone: electret condenser

Cable length: none

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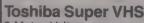


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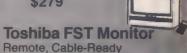
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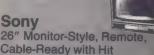
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Plug: multipin input/output/power/control

Tape format: VHS Tape speed: SP

Play speed select: not applicable

Still frame: yes Frame advance: no Slow motion: no Speed play: no

Rapid search: see Cue & review Cue & review: 3X approx.

Visible FF and Rew: no

Fast forward/rewind time: 6 min. for T-120 approx.

Remote pause: yes

Remote: wired run/pause with run indica-

Separate eject: ves Counter digits: 4, in finder

Counter memory: yes

Program start locator/index/cue: no

Audio dub: yes Video dub: no

Auto rewind: yes, in fast forward or play modes

Linear audio: mono Hi-Fi audio: none

Accessories: supplied—PV-A22M AC Adapter, PV-BP80 Battery Pack, VSQ0421 Remote Control, antenna cable, 300 to 75-ohm antenna transformer, audio/video cable, earphone, shoulder strap, 3 NR44 batteries for clock, and PV-H22M hard Carrying Case with 2 keys

RESULTS & RATINGS

Horizontal resolution: 250 lines, VCR: 300 lines Camera

S/N, video luminance: 43.6 dB, unweighted; 46.4 dB, weighted

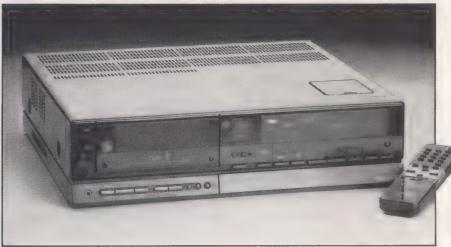
S/N, chroma AM: 44 dB S/N, chroma PM: 39.7 dB

Audio frequency response: 100-

10,500 Hz, +1.7/-3 dB S/N, audio: 42 dB

Audio distortion: 2.1 percent Overall picture quality: excellent

Audio quality: very good Ease of operation: excellent Overall performance: excellent



Sony EV-S700U 8mm VCR

Sony 8mm Table Model VCR



Sony's new 8mm table-top VCR brings the small format out of its niche as a camcorder-only medium. Growth of the two-year-old 8mm format has

been slow partly because there was virtually no pre-recorded software. Sony and Kodak's announcements to release feature-length movies on 8mm make the small format's table-top VCR much more appealing. Sony's deal with Paramount calls for 15 current movie releases in addition to the 35 children and music video releases currently available. Kodak's deal with Embassy releases 46 titles.

Two of the 8mm format's features con-

tribute to its progress: stereo PCM (pulse code modulation) digital sound and a second speed that doubles the record/play time. Sony's table model can also record six stereo PCM tracks without a picture, at both speeds. Using P6-120 tape you can record up to 24 hours of audio on a single cassette and cycle through those tracks for almost uninterrupted listening.

The Sony EV-S700U offers automatic or manual audio adjustment, audio dubbing to the PCM tracks, FM simulcast recording, adjustable headphone volume, adjustable sharpness, timer recordings for up to 6 events (including daily) over 3 weeks, one touch record, and an infrared remote control.

It mates with any Sony VCR or 8mm camcorder via a Control S output for simplified editing of tapes. It can also be used as the record deck under the control of the RM-E100 Video Editing Controller. Its tuner can record from 125 cable channels. A loop-through output and tunable Aux RF

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The bottom and sides are bare except for ventilation holes, but the top has a compartment with more controls. Switches select either normal or CATV, and auto stereo. There is a rotary sharpness control and a screwdriver control for still adjust. There are also buttons to add to and erase from the scan-tuning sequence and to select aux preset—the output channel of the cable descrambler.

The AC cable is at the top right near with an unswitched AC outlet directly below. At the left side of the panel is a single mini-jack for the Control S input. Below are F-connectors for antenna/cable input, loop through (to the descrambler box), Aux input (from the descrambler), and RF output. Below those are the channel 3/4 RF output switch and the video input and output jacks.

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Two of the 8mm format's features con-

trol.

It mates with any Sony VCR or 8mm camcorder via a Control S output for simplified editing of tapes. It can also be used as the record deck under the control of the RM-E100 Video Editing Controller. Its tuner can record from 125 cable channels. A loop-through output and tunable Aux RF

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input allows you to mix one scrambled cable channel with non-scrambled ones under timer operation, though you need ■ descrambler box. It also decodes MTS stereo and SAP broadcasts and tunes broadcast channels 2 through 69.

Description. The EV-S700U is a petite black machine less than half the size of a comparable VHS or Beta VCR. Its power and eject buttons and a small volume control are left of the top-loading cassette hatch. To the right are the IR remote control sensor, a record slider, and a select button.

The select button switches the functions of a row of buttons to the right. Depending on the position of the select, the buttons are: clock or timer, counter reset or timer check, tape return or timer set, TV-VTR or next, and +, -, and Aux. The Aux button switches between the regular antenna RF feed and the output of the cable descrambler.

Above the row of buttons are indicators for PCM, multi, the digits 1 through 6 for the multi-PCM tracks, the auto level, tuner/line/simulcast, the timer, right and left audio levels, events with the numbers 1 to 6, the days of the week, timer on and off, the clock and counter, SP, LP, and the channel numbers.

Lower on the front panel are a headphone mini-jack, buttons for rewind, play, fast forward, stop, pause/still, step, slow, and 2X. The blank area further right is a door concealing buttons for clock set, input select, and SP/LP record speed. Playback speed selection is automatic.

There are also switches for Auto-PCM/mix/standard playback audio, main/SAP on linear track for MTS, and a multi-PCM switch with positions for normal with picture, serial, and parallel.

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In the bottom row are three pairs of audio jacks—one for input, two for outputs. All the audio and video connectors are RCA-type pin jacks.

The full-function remote adds a 10-digit keypad for direct chanel access, which is not available on the VCR. In addition it has a button for TV/VTR and a +/- tuning rocker on its right side. On its top are buttons for power, enter, aux, 2X, freeze picture, step, slow, play, rewind, fast forward, stop, record, pause, and a command on/off switch to stop the remote from sending signals.

Operation. There is one major difference between the S700 and half-inch VCRs. Like the Pioneer 8mm table model and the Kodak VCR, it offers multi-track PCM that records an extra five audio tracks instead of a video track for a total of six stereo tracks. The controls for multi-PCM are the only significant departure from traditional table-model VCRs.

The controls are a switch in the covered front compartment to select the PCM mode for recording, and the audio output selector that offers PCM, mix, or standard (mono AFM). AFM is similar to the system

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Editing POWER: Hybrid's (3) fader controls are super for editing home video movies (for example, weddings). Fade button allows alteration from full bright to black in a graduated way avoiding jerkiness between scenes and lending that dramatic smooth touch to entrances and endings. Duration control assures fade time will be perfectly even and consistent. X-CH fade, fades to black, switches inputs, then fades back in automatically!



And yes, you guessed it - Hybrid's Fade and X-CH fade buttons we with S.E.G. to give you wipe to black and extraordinary X-CH wipe to

Ease Of Operation: The new Hybrid is already developing a reput tion for being the processor with the easiest operation. (Believe it not, that's not an unimportant consideration when shopping for processor.) Hybrid's front panel is clean and legible, Rear panel logically arranged. Our manual is written in everyday language. mumbo-jumbo you can't understand. You will succeed. Set-up cant accomplished in record time. If there is a problem just phone "N Hook-Up"

Phone "Mr. Hook-Up" If you have a connection question before during or after purchase of your Hybrid, phone "Mr. Hook-Up" (0) whiz kid hook-up engineer) here at VIP. He'll be glad to help "get yo connected!"

Powerful Value: In Video's Dec. issue, Hybrid, with its' eight fell tures was selected best video processor value.

"The Hybrid contains one of the best image enhancers we've ever seen. --this u does it all -- what it does, it does better than any other unit on the market consider it one of the best buys in video."

What's My Ace In The Hole? Hybrid's 7 day free trial: If not de lighted, return for full refund minus handling and shipping.

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Zipstick Controller, Gives You 4 More Unique Special Effects









(2) Scrolling It's a thin bright frame surrounded by black

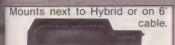
How it works: Your Zipstick scrolls frame down screen to expose your credits. Use with camera and easel.

Produced By Don Washburn

Directed By

Produced By Don Washburn Directed 4 Peter Klein

Scrolling is a good way to display credits. Use your camera and easel



Translucency Controls brightness of all areas outside the spotlight, from very bright, to deep gray.

Fade Picture fades/in to a Spotlight or fades/out to soft gray.

(3) Targeted Converge Presto! A wipe box shrinks to any target you choose left or right of center screen. How it works: Select a target center with Zipstick. V, on Manual. H, on Auto. Turn Translucency to black, as you press Fade.



Zipstick Zips effects to any position on the screen.

Horizontal and Vertical Will manually converge wipes to shape spotlights.

Auto/Manual Switches select Auto/Manual operation of wipes.

A/B Switch Operates Hybrid A/B Switch.









End your tape by converging to any dramatic event.

(4) Bouncing Ball Effect A tiny bright ball, an electronic pointer.

How it works: Zipstick zooms ball around screen as you point out details. Usually used with VCR in freeze frame or live with camera.

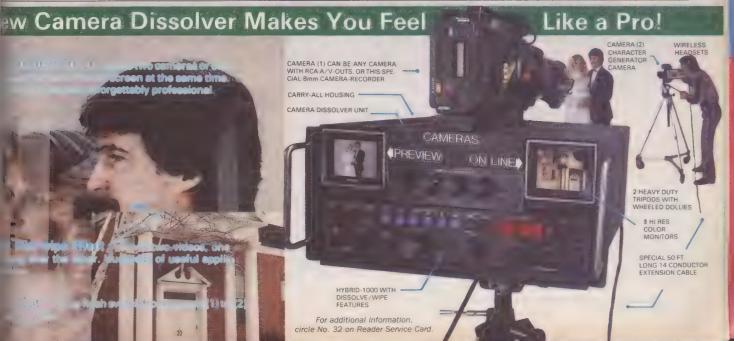








Use bouncing ball to point out a particular feature or detail. Especially good for fine details.



used for Beta Hi-Fi that outputs the audio as an FM signal between the chrominance and luminance signals recorded by the video heads. An indicator tells which of the six audio tracks is playing or recording in multi-PCM.

Other controls resemble those on Sony's earlier Beta Hi-Fi models, like the spring-loaded slide for record instead of two buttons. This safety feature is even echoed on the remote. Its single weakness is that if you select SAP and no SAP is broadcast no sound is recorded.

Performance. The EV-S700U delivers picture quality comparable with other 8mm PCM machines. Its horizontal resolution is 230 lines with video S/N of 40.6 dB, unweighted, and 46.1 dB, weighted at the SP speed. LP figures are less than 1 dB lower. Its chroma AM S/N was 42.6 dB at both speeds. Its chroma PM S/N was 42.3 dB. We rate its picture as excellent among 8mm machines even though one camcorder yielded higher S/N ratios.

On its mono AFM track, the frequency response is among the widest available on 8mm: 31.5 Hz to 20 kHz, +0.3/-3 dB and 6 dB down at 20 Hz. On the other PCM VCR we tested, Kodak's MVS-5000 AFM audio was filtered to the same 14.5 kiloHertz range as the PCM. AFM Dynamic range was 81 dB with a total harmonic distortion of 0.4 percent.

Its PCM audio frequency response was 20 Hz to 14.5 kHz, +0.4/-3 dB. That's better on the low end than the other PCM machine we measured. Dynamic range was measured at 87 dB and rated at 88 dB with a total harmonic distortion of 0.5 percent. The PCM track that accompanies video is stereo with separation measured at 81 dB. The multi track PCM without video gave similar performance. Both measurements are excellent by 8mm standards.

But for the few extra operations required for PCM recording, the S700 has fewer operating controls than many halfinch VCRs with the same flexibility. We rate ease of operation as excellent.

Conclusion. With feature films already available 8mm table-model VCRs can become the core of a family's entertainment center. Negotiations are in progress to make music-only tapes available in multi PCM format with a capacity of 24 hours per cassette. That could let you throw a whole party without having to tend the music.

The Sony EV-S700, a viewscreen, an audio amplifier, and speakers could serve as an entire entertainment center. The only extra you may want is a camcorder, and Sony now sells its Handycam as a separate. It's a fascinating prospect. We suggest you see and hear Sony's EV-S700. You'll be tempted. V

Test Report: Sony EV-S700U Table-Model 8mm VCR with PCM Sound

Date of test: May 1986 Suggested retail price: \$1395 Weight: 16 pounds 2 ounces

Dimensions: 3-3/4 x 14 x 13-7/8 inches $(h \times w \times d)$

Power requirements: 120 VAC, 60 Hz

Power consumption: 48 W

Tape format: 8mm

Tape speeds: SP (1.43mm/sec), LP (0.72mm/sec)

Playing time (P6-120): 2/4 hours, SP/ LP picture with sound; 12/24 hours, SP/ LP PCM sound only

Play speed select: automatic Still frame: yes, called Still Picture

Frame advance: yes Slow motion: 1/5X Speed play: 2X

Rapid search: see Cue & review Cue & review: 5X approx with some

noise at SP

529

Visible FF and Rew: no

Fast forward/rewind time: 3 min. for

Remote pause: through Control S input (see text)

Remote: IR wireless with switch for remote control on/off and buttons for Power, TV/VTR, 10-digit keypad and Enter, Aux/(antenna), X2, Freeze Picture, Step,

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Videotests -

Slow, Play, Rewind (Search), Fast Forward (Search), Stop, Record (slider), and Pause

Separate eject: yes

Counter digits: 4 or approx. time remaining (see text)

Counter memory: yes, return to counter zero

Program start locator/index/cue: no

Audio dub: yes Video dub: no

Auto rewind: yes

Linear audio: none

Hi-Fi (AFM) audio: mono

PCM (8-bit digital) audio: stereo with picture, 6 stereo tracks without picture Tuning method: frequency synthesis

Channel selectors: programmable scan on VCR, Keypad direct access plus scan on remote

Preset method: add/erase from scan sequence

MTS (stereo) capable: yes with SAP Broadcast tuning range: 2-13, 14-69 Cable tuning range: A-8, 2 to 4, A-7 (5), A-6 (6), 7 to 13, A to W, W+1 to W+58, A-5 to A-1, W+59 to W+84 (125 channels)

AFT: always on

Channel lock: yes

Timer: 6 events (including daily), 3 weeks **Battery back-up:** 20 seconds for pro-

gram memories; none for clock

Auto channel-change: yes

Accessories: IR remote control (2 AA batteries supplied), screwdriver for still adjustment, 300-ohm to 75-ohm matching transformer, and 75-ohm antenna cable

RESULTS & RATINGS

Horizontal resolution: 230 lines S/N, video luminance: 40.6 dB, unweighted, 46.1 dB, weighted at SP, slightly less at LP

S/N, chroma AM: 42.6 dB both speeds S/N, chroma PM: 42.3 dB both speeds AFM audio frequency response: 31.5 to 20,000 Hz, +0.3/-3 dB; 20 to 20,000 Hz, +0.3/-6 dB, both speeds

PCM audio frequency response: 20 to 14,000 Hz, +0.4/-3 dB, measured; 20-15,000 Hz, rated

Dynamic range, PCM audio: 87 dB, measured: 88 dB, rated

Audio distortion: less than 0.5%

Overall picture quality: excellent compared to 8mm VCRs

Audio quality: excellent compared to 8mm VCRs

Ease of operation: excellent

Overall performance: excellent

Note: VCR ratings are made within each format-Beta with Beta, 8mm with 8mm, etc. In general, SuperBeta offers the highest detail, followed by Beta, VHS HQ, VHS, and 8mm. On sharpness, the order is VHS HQ, SuperBeta, Beta, VHS, and 8mm. On video and chroma S/N, the variation is wide with little pattern by format. On audio, Hi-Fi/AFM offers the widest frequency response followed by PCM and linear audio. On dynamic range, the order is PCM, AFM, and linear audio. On distortion, PCM and AFM are far better than linear audio. On the remaining parameters, patterns are difficult to distinguish by format.



Panasonic PV-1742 VHS HQ VCR

Panasonic Deluxe VHS VCR

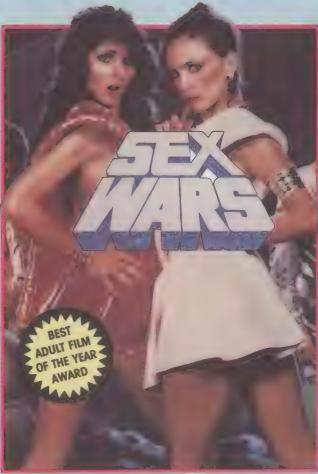


Panasonic's newest top-of-the-line VCR, the PV-1742, goes a long way toward solving the most common complaint about VCRs, operating complexity. It also delivers wonderful picture and sound. These, plus a host of features make it very desirable.

Studies show that consumers are reluctant to use the VCR's timer because they find programming complicated. Panasonic tries to solve this by showing the programmed entries on the screen and on the VCR's display. You can program via the remote or at the VCR.

The onscreen instructions summarize what is in the timer memory. A Help button on the remote triggers a menu that flashes





STARRING: Laurie Smith, Paul Thomas, Robin Cannes, Richard Pacheco, Gale Sterling, Billy Dee, & Mai Lin

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THIS MONTHS TOP 40

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Controls for Panasonic PV-1742

a cursor under the entry you must make

entering timer information available. Panasonic couldn't simplify it more without limiting choices. Maybe someday someone will invent a VCR that can read TV Guide.

The remainder of the design shows the same thoughtfulness. Its stereo Hi-Fi audio is excellent, and the HQ circuitry delivers a crisp, brilliant picture.

Description. The PV-1742 is black with a few touches of color. It is light and compact by VHS VCR standards. On the front panel are the remote sensor window, the eject, and VCR/TV and power buttons. The PV-1742 offers the best method for | To the right are the casette hatch, an indicator panel, and an up/down rocker for scan tuning.

Below the cassette hatch are the audio level and active channel indicator, LEDs for stereo and audio B (SAP). a switch for auto/manual record level, and a pair of sliders for manual control. Further right are the level meter switch, followed by a button for audio output, and the input selector with positions for audio only, line, tuner and two-channel audio. The remainder of that row has buttons for timer on/off, setting the clock and timer, standby, one touch record, counter reset and memory.

Below the cassette hatch are the transport controls: rewind, stop, fast forward, pause/still, play, slow/frame advance, record, and audio dub. The play button puts the VCR into X2 mode if you press it twice. The slow/frame advance button provides slow speed if pressed during play and frame advance if pressed during still frame.

The logo conceals a control compartment. Inside are the SP/LP/SLP record speed switch, buttons for counter/time remaining and mix (Hi-Fi plus linear), and a switch that determines whether main or audio II (SAP) sound is recorded on the linear track when SAP is broadcast. Also present are rotary control for normal tracking and one for headphones level.

Jacks for the headphones, plus left and right microphones, round out the compartment. The vertical V lock for still frame is I screwdriver adjustment underneath the VCR. Slow tracking is adjusted from the remote control.

The top panel houses a compartment with a rotary sharpness control, switches for normal/thin tape, channel memory on/ off, and buttons for add/erase, TV system select (normal broadcast/CATV/HRC/ IRC), mono/auto for MTS sound, and pay-TV select for the output channel of a pay-TV decoder.

The rear panel has the AC cord and an AC outlet that lets you turn on manual TVs from the VCR's remote control. A switch next to the outlet disables the remote switching feature to give you an unswitched appliance outlet.

In depressions near the AC outlet are the channel 3/4 output switch and a CATV adapter jack that lets you mix one scrambled cable channel among the unscrambled ones during timer operation. Also present are connectors for VHF and UHF inputs and outputs.

At the top of the rear panel are RCAtype pin jacks for video in, stereo audio in, video out, and stereo audio out plus a sub-mini jack for camera remote. There is also an audio filter switch to reduce background hiss when recording simulcasts on the Hi-Fi tracks.

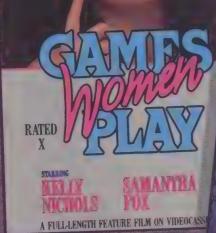
The remote control has a handy smoke gray slider to protect less-frequently used buttons. The other unusual feature is the switching of the accessory AC outlet. Otherwise, it is a standard infrared wireless





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remote control with remote programming and control of onscreen displays.

Operation. The 1742 offers a large number of features and controls. To reduce the number of buttons Panasonic resorted to multifunction keys. Color coding, logical grouping, and clear indicators on the VCR and onscreen divide the controls. You must read the instruction manual to get the most out of this VCR. We rate ease of operation as excellent. The only way to further simplify the 1742 would be to make it take voice commands.

Performance. VHS HQ technology is

about a year old and we're still establishing standards. But the measurements are starting to show a pattern. The PV-1742 delivers a horizontal resolution of 250 lines. The HQ circuitry makes the edges of objects crisp. Video S/N was measured at 41.8 decibels unweighted, and 48.3 dB weighted. Chroma AM S/N was 44.7 dB, and chroma PM S/N was 38.3 dB. Its resolution equals the best we've measured but the S/Ns are a little weaker. Visually there is slight difference between it and the best measured. We rate picture performance as very good/excellent.

On audio not much has changed from previous models. It remains one of the best Hi-Fi machines. Its Hi-Fi frequency response is 20 Hertz to 20 kiloHertz, +0.3/ -2 dB at all speeds. At SP speed its linear track is within 3 dB from 63 Hz to 12 Hz. Hi-Fi dynamic range is 82 dB, and S/N for the linear audio track is 43 dB. Total harmonic distortion was 0.4 percent on Hi-Fi and 2.2 percent on the linear track. Audio is excellent.

Conclusion. The Panasonic PV-1742 is easy to use and delivers very good/excellent video and excellent audio. It carries a suggested price of \$1250 which makes it a highly competitive high-end VHS model. We recommend you include it among those you must see if you're considering a topgrade VCR.

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For additional information

Test Report: Panasonic PV-1742 VHS HQ Hi-Fi **VCR** with MTS

DATA

Date of test: May 1986 Suggested retail price: \$1250

Weight: 16.1 pounds

Dimensions: 4 x 16-15/16 x 14-3/16

Power requirements: 120 VAC, 60Hz Power consumption: 32 W approx.

Tape format: VHS

Tape speeds: SP, LP, SLP

Play speed select: automatic

Still frame: yes

Frame advance: yes, shares button with Slow on machine; separate buttons on remote

Slow motion: yes

Speed play: X2, on machine press Play twice; separate button on remote

Cue & review: 5X, SP; 9X, SLP; the manual doesn't say anything about LP, it works with some noise

Visible FF and Rew: no

Fast forward/rewind time: less than 4 min, for T-120

Remote pause: yes

Remote: IR wireless with buttons for Power, channel Up and Down, 10-digit keypad, Record (2 buttons), VCR/TV. Stop, Play, Pause/Still, Frame Advance, Rewind (Search), Fast Search (Search), Slow, slow speed Up and Down, X2, slow tracking Up and Down, volume Up and Down, TV on/off, Function (display), Timer, Normal (end programming), OSD (on screen display timer info), Program, Select, and set Up and Down; plus a slider over all buttons listed after Function

Separate eject: yes Counter digits: 4 Counter memory: yes

Program start locator/index/cue: no... Audio dub: only to mono linear track

Video dub: only by rerecording

Auto rewind: yes Linear audio: mono Hi-Fi audio: stereo

Tuning method: frequency synthesis Channel selectors: up/down scan on VCR; scan plus keypad direct access from Preset method: add/erase from scan sequence

Broadcast tuning range: 2 to 13, 14 to 69

Cable tuning range: 2 to 13, A to W, AA to EEE, A-5 to A-1, 5A, ultra band 65 to 94

AFT: yes

Channel lock: yes

Timer: 8 programs, 3 weeks

Auto channel-change: yes

Accessories: supplied—remote control with batteries, V Lock tool, antenna cables and transformer; optional—PV-CT2 CATV Adapter, cameras, camera power supply, and cassettes

RESULTS & RATINGS

Horizontal resolution: 250 lines **5/N, video luminance:** 41.8 dB, unweighted; 48.3 dB, weighted

S/N, chroma AM: 44.7 dB S/N, chroma PM: 38.3 dB

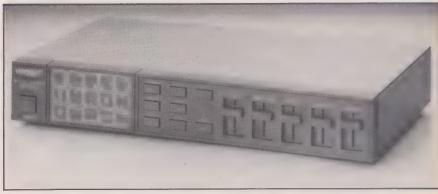
Audio frequency response: Hi-Fi—20-20,000 Hz, +0.3/-2 dB; line-ar—63-12,000 Hz, -3 dB, SP; 63-8000 Hz, -3 dB, LP; 63-5000 Hz, SLP

Dynamic range, Hi-Fi: 82 dB S/N, linear audio: 43 dB

Total harmonic distortion: 0.4%, Hi-Fi; 2.2%, linear audio

Overall picture quality: very good/excellent

Audio quality: excellent
Ease of operation: excellent
Overall performance: excellent



Vidicraft SEG-200 Special Effects Generator

Vidicraft Special Effects Generator



Editing video with most consumer VCRs usually results in messy cuts between scenes. We've reviewed a few devices that make clean edits,

notably the Sci-Tech SEG 21 and the Sansui AV-99 (June 1986), which works with non-synchronized sources but does not

permit direct fades between them. The Vidicraft SEG-200 goes the extra mile. It adds automatic fades and effects between two synchronized or non-synched sources through background color, black or white.

It will let you use two synched cameras or one synched camera and a VCR as the master synch source for glitch-free special effects. The synch pulse is the part of a video signal that helps the scanning process reform the picture and control the image on a TV screen. With non-synched sources, a matte covers the glitch to create professional-looking edits, fades and wipes. Unlike the Sansui, it doesn't colorize pictures for music video-like images.



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But that doesn't matter to us since the look is gimmicky.

Description. The SEG-200 is black with a few touches of color. It is only 3 inches high by 16.8 wide by 9.9 deep, and weighs 8.5 pounds. It is too shallow to put under your VCR, but it looks good on top.

Except for one set-up switch at the back, the controls are on the front. At left is the power switch and the logo. In the center are 12 pattern buttons representing variations on straight lines and squares. An Alternate button switches the 12 patterns to a second set of variations.

At right are buttons for the alternate switch, slant, fade/effect, matte, manual color, cut, and audio. All have at least one indicator. There are sliders for color, softness, angle, auto rate, and position.

The slant button combined with the angle slider rotates whatever pattern is in use. The softness slider regulates the edges of the pattern. With the color button off, the slider ranges from black to white with many grays. With color in, it goes through the full spectrum.

The auto button and auto rate slider work together to vary the speed of wipes,

fades, and effects. The position slider works with the manual button to let you fade at your own speed between inputs A and B. If the sources are not synched (gen locked), you must use a matte to fade directly between sources. The cut button instantly switches sources with a small roll in black if they aren't synched.

The rear panel has a power cord, input jacks for sources A and B (one for video and stereo audio), a synch switch to tell the generator if source B is synched to A, a single set of outputs for video and stereo audio, and a black burst output. Black burst is a synched signal with all the information for horizontal, vertical, and color.

The black burst connects to the device that accepts external synch, and that lets source B be synched to source A. A few consumer and most professional cameras accept external synch. No consumer VCRs accept external synch, so time base correctors are normally required for synch between VCRs.

Operation. The SEG-200 is not difficult to operate, but there are so many options that Vidicraft doesn't even try to cover them all in the manual. We received an early version of the 200 to test. It came with the SEG-100 manual plus a few pages explaining the differences between the two machines. The completed SEG-200 manual should be packed with current shipments. Poke every button and try every slider to back up the short paragraphs written about each control. You may discover a few things not even hinted at. However, we have one beef about its operation. The controls on the front are vertical, making it awkward to use in manual mode. In automatic you only have to punch buttons rather than move a slider evenly. Still, we rate ease of operation as very good/excellent.

Performance. As with all signal processors evaluation is based on the ability to pass an unmodified signal with the least alteration. Video bandpass, akin to horizontal resolution, is rated to 4.2 mega-Hertz (the NTSC limit) within +/-1 decibel. We measured it as meeting that and 1.5 dB at 5 MHz (400 lines). Differential phase (color error) was rated and measured at 2 degrees, very good.

The differential gain (contrast ratio error) was rated at 5 percent. We measured 4 percent. Tilt was rated and measured at 2 percent. Isolation between video channels was rated at -55 dB and measured -57 dB. This is excellent video performance by consumer standards.

Audio frequency response from 20 Hz to 20 kiloHertz was +0.3/-0.8 dB. Hum and noise was measured at -62 dB and crosstalk (the isolation between inputs) was -60 dB. These are great measurements for linear track audio, but it could degrade Hi-Fi audio to the 60 dB range. It's almost as quiet as a good LP. We rate audio performance as very good/excellent.



Conclusion. This is the most versatile SEG we've tried. That versatility and excellent video performance make it very useful. You can always use some other box to handle audio, but we bet you won't notice the slight degradation of the Hi-Fi audio. You may find the vertical control panel a little awkward for some operations. But you can always raise the front panel with some books. Overall we rate the Vidicraft SEG-200 as excellent/very good and wish it would put the preview output back in. We recommend it highly.

Test Report: Vidicraft SEG-200 Special Effects Generator

Date of test: May 1986

Manufacturer: Vidicraft, 0704 Bancroft Street, Portland, Oregon 97201; Telephone: (503) 223-4884

Function: to create fades, color mattes, effects and switching, and auto switching through matte between 2 synched or nonsynched (some restrictions) video sources for recording or display. Audio follows vid-

Suggested retail price: \$499.95

Weight: 8.5 pounds

Dimensions: 3 x 16.8 x 9.9 inches

 $(h \times w \times d)$

Power requirements: 120 VAC, 50-60

Power consumption: 10 W

Video inputs: 2

Video input level: 1 V nominal, 0.4 V to 1.4 Vp-p

Video input impedance: 7^r hms

Stereo audio inputs: 2

Audio input level: 1 V nom

Video output: 1

Video gain: +/-1 dB (into 75 ohms)

Stereo audio output: 1 Audio gain: unity

Audio output, max: 4 Vp-p

Black burst output: 1

Connectors: all RCA-type phono jacks (pin jacks)

RESULTS & RATINGS

Video bandpass: +/-1 dB to 4.2 MHz, rated; -1.5 dB at 5 MHz

Differential phase (10-90% APL): less than 2 degrees, rated and measured

Differential gain: less than 5%, rated; 4%, measured

Tilt: less than 2 degrees, rated and meas-

Channel isolation: less than -55 dB, rated; -57 dB, measured

Audio frequency response: 20 Hz-20 kHz +/-1 dB, rated; +0.3/-0.8 dB. measured

Hum and noise, audio: -60 dB, rated; -62 dB, measured

Crosstalk, audio: -60 dB, rated and measured

Total harmonic distortion: 0.05%

Picture quality: excellent

Audio quality: very good/excellent (see text)

Ease of operation: very good/excellent (see text)

Overall performance: excellent/very good (see text)

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VACATION SHOOT

continued from page 49

capture an interesting closeup of the statue of St. Michael, patron saint of the city, that crowns the spire. Opposite the Town Hall is the Broodhuis. Next to it are the former Guild Houses. Masses of gables, balconies, and pillars let you work with detail as well as perspective and angularity.

Historic monuments are multi-dimensional. Don't settle for the same views that are on gift shop postcards. An example that illustrates the choices at your command is the Arc de Triomphe and the Place Charles

de Gaulle which surrounds it. Together they form one of Paris' most famous landmarks. The arch is truly colossal—164 feet high and 148 wide—with massive ornamental reliefs. It is difficult to capture from any one angle. Fortunately, 12 avenues radiate from the arch, which commemorates Napoleon's victories and spans the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Walk around the square and shoot from several locations. First, shoot from in front of the arch—trying to get people in the foreground to give an idea of its scale. A frieze of hundreds of figures encircles the arch in a crowded composition you will have trouble videotaping in detail because

of their position and height. So stay with general views showing the arch's lines and grace.

You should choose at least three of the following for taping sites: the Champs Elysees, Avenue Wagram, Avenue de la Grand Armee, Avenue Kleber, Avenue Victor Hugo, and Avenue MacMahon. These offer the best perspectives.

You can climb to the top of the arch for a great view of the capital, from la Concorde and the Tuileries to the modern skyscrapers of a La Defense, Paris' little Manhattan in the suburbs.

The broadest panorama is from the second level of the Eiffel Tower. Shooting from the third, highest level will make your tape look like it was shot from an airplane. If the day is clear you and your camera will be able to scan 40 miles. Ascend the tower an hour before sunset and shoot scenes periodically until night falls and the tower is bathed in a wonderful golden light, a color added this year. Your footage will be spectacular.

And a highlight of your vacation will be ready for your edit.

SEE THE WORLD

continued from page 53

ry much of the weight. Several companies serve as travel video resource groups. International Adventure Video, a company that has produced a tape about Egypt, also publishes a newsletter compiling the latest video titles on travel, with prices and brief descriptions. Travel Images and Sallyforth also sell travel tapes by mail.

Although many will be available at your local video stores soon, not all retailers choose to carry them at this stage. In the meantime, available travel product is being released by a handful of companies that figure people who can afford a VCR can probably afford a vacation. So, if vou're planning a trip, don't ignore travel videos, but don't rely on them exclusively for information. Travel video can entice you, point out last-minute spots of interest, or provide some historical information before you take off. Sallyforth's Guide to Cruise Shibs suggests reading up on your destination before you go. It was the first valuable travel tip gleaned from all my hours of traveling by video.

BERLITZER

continued from page 56

But on the whole, the French video is vastly superior to the other two because, while it, too, follows the airport-hotel-restaurant format, it has a few terrific improvements in the way of what the French call *actualites*, or news clips. Instead of feeble sound effects of jets taking off, plates clattering, and horns honking, there are actual shots of Orly airport, as well as

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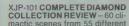
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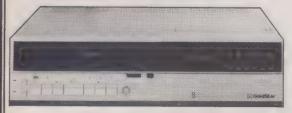
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Hours: Mon-Fri 9am-5pm #12 Millpark Ct. • St. Louis, MO • 63043 Dealer and Volume orders available footage of Paris hotels, restaurants, streets, and stores. It's possible this wasn't Crown's idea: the French Government Tourist Office may have been more generous with its film clips than, say, Lufthansa, which supplied the opening scenes on the German video. But the clips

This became especially apparent as I watched the German video several more times. Although I did learn a little more German with every viewing, I also found the video more and more tedious. I began to focus unkindly on the physical attributes of the actors, who after all, have little to do while you're parroting back at them but stare and smirk into the camera like new users of contact lenses.

I noticed that Mrs. Tourist looks a lot like Nancy Reagan and Mr. Commentator has very strange ears. A few more travelogue scenes would have broken the boredom barrier, as well as reminding me of why I was learning the language in the first place. It also would have showed that video could do something an audio program couldn't.

There's room for a terrific language video, even if this series isn't it. First of all, video is a cost-effective medium, since private language lessons cost at least \$20 an hour, not to mention the fact that when they're over they're over. You can't rewind and take them again. It's also nice to be able to take a language lesson when you're in the mood, not when a class is scheduled. Of course, you don't get the feedback you would from a teacher, which is especially crucial for pronunciation and accent. But hey, if you were really serious about learning a language you'd be using a grammar book, not a videotape.

I left for Zurich two weeks after my first video German lessons. I watched the video several more times, largely because it was laying around the house. But I spent more time with a Berlitz audio tape that came with a little phrase book. Once in Zurich, I confess I didn't need to speak a word of German. With one exception, everyone I met spoke French, English or Italian. The one person who didn't was the breakfast server in my hotel, and we managed to understand each other with lots of smiles and sign language. Actually, I did speak to her in German, but inadvertently. I ordered coffee. She brought kaffee.

SCUBACAM ARRIVES

continued from page 61

comes with a big protective sleeve around the dome port. These features guarantee it will be the most durable of the Handycam housings, as well as the heaviest. The added weight can cause shakes while taping if the diver hasn't adjusted the weight belt to compensate, but the Mini8 has two big grips for good control while it's running.

The viewfinder is a special optical piece atop the front of the camera. Aqua Vision

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has come up with a clever system for filters: flat squares that fit against the lens at the front of the camera. The Mini8 costs \$769, with a light coming later this year. Meanwhile, any underwater movie light can be used. Aqua Vision is in Montreal, Canada (514-336-7051).

Agua Video, a veteran underwater housing firm, is also bringing out a Handycam housing. Like the Hypertech unit, the Handycam fits into the housing with its grip on, making it easy to take the camera out of the housing and shoot on the boat after a dive. The unit is made of PVC plastic and features a single pistol grip with the trigger on the right side of the housing. Although this means you need two hands to shoot, the unit is well balanced.

Aqua Video offers two versions of the housing: the PVC6CCDM8, at \$399, with a flat port, and the PVC6CCDWA, at \$749. which comes with a wide-angle adapter behind a dome port. Standard filters fit the housings, and a special closeup filter is available. I tested the unit with the Aqua Video SM 3501 light, which has a battery pack that conveniently attaches to your tank. I had excellent results. It is a powerful professional lighting unit, not specifically designed for the Handycam housing. Like the pro-quality Hypertech light, it also sells for \$1595. Agua Video is located in Miami (305-558-4336).

During this past winter and spring I have been shooting both half-inch and 8mm videos. I was surprised by the way the 8mm format proved itself. It had better color both in and out of the water, and it makes better copies. We provide our clients with tapes of their dive in whatever format they want, so we are constantly dubbing 8mm into Beta and VHS formats. There has never been a problem.

If you're considering a vacation that will include scuba diving and would like to try making an underwater video, it would be worth your while to check ahead with the resort to find out if it has outfits you can rent. The recent appearance of the Handycam and its underwater housings (indeed, the Marine Pack is just reaching stores) means that while good equipment for recreational renting is available, it may not yet be part of the everyday business of the area you're visiting. However, I predict that within a year diving resorts everywhere will have 8mm video equipment alongside the fins, masks, and snorkels.

I have no doubt that the Handycam, in whatever housing, will cause a sea change in underwater video. The great ease of use that results from losing 14 to 20 pounds of mass, combined with the incredibly simple aim-and-shoot mechanics of the camera, means that more time and energy can be devoted to capturing the beauty of the sea and its inhabitants. With the increasing acceptance of the 8mm format when it gets bumped up to three-quarter inch, even professionals are likely to start making greater use of these cameras. I know of at least one who already has-me.

For additional information, circle No. 48 on Reader Service Card

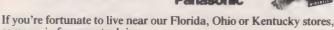


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SUPERSYSTEMS

continued from page 65

dio and video hardware can be found at discounters for bargain basement prices, the actual money saved becomes questionable

It may be more economical to build your own super-system. Shop around for the best buys in remote-controlled audio/video hardware and invest in General Electric's Control Central universal remote control. GE's device can learn the infrared codes of four different audio/video components. The only other chore is to find a piece of furniture to hold all of the equipment.

However, this approach requires that you pay careful attention to matching your components. Make sure, too, that you have plenty of extra inputs and outputs on your amplifier/controller for future additions.

The ability to add components should be a prime consideration when shopping for any super-system, no matter how complete it seems. After all, why shell out so much money for a deluxe system today, if vou're going to be locked into obsolescence tomorrow? For example, will that super-system accommodate a satellite TV receiver? Note that most system remotes only operate the included equipment. So, even if you expand your super-system, the new additions may not be addressable from your easy chair.

PSEUDO-SUPER-SYSTEMS

Be on guard for the "pseudo" super-system. These are often nothing more than high-end audio rack systems with video switching capabilities. While they may be perfectly good buys, they're not really comparable to a truly integrated audio/video system, which should at least include a color monitor/receiver and extra video inputs on the amplifier (for the later addition of a VCR or videodisc player).

For limited purposes, however, a pseudo-super-system may be fine. In fact, while some manufacturers are not packaging super-systems per se, they are creating a product line of all the necessary ingredients. Denon, Harmon Kardon, and Yamaha are examples of this trend.

PI AYTIME

Once you have an idea of the size and makeup of the super-system you want, it's time to hit the demo rooms. Pay careful attention to the picture quality of the monitor/receiver, since this is the heart of any video system. Most companies supply monitor/receivers, but some integrated packages-such as Fisher's AVS-1686 and RCA's Dimensia—are fitted with optional rear-projection sets. Another exception is Pioneer's Foresight 70, which features the high-quality TVM-251A color monitor (with separate, MTS-equipped tuner) or the new SD-P40 rear projection TV.

In systems where the speakers are near



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the video monitor, it's imperative they be magnetically shielded. However, you may opt to spread your speakers away from the central tower of power to enhance the stereo imaging of your system. This improves music programming but seems to hurt the spoken word. Either way, speakers traditionally have been the weak link in one-brand systems and should be listened to with a discriminating ear. You may ultimately decide to purchase system without the included speakers and select your own pair later.

One exception is NEC's Renaissance Series, which offers three-way speakers created by noted audio designer Richard Shahinian. Aside from the speakers, consumers customize their systems with a choice of components. The options include two stereo monitor/receivers, two integrated amps, two CD players, an AM/FM tuner, and a Hi-Fi Beta or VHS VCR.

While many systems come with graphic equalizers, some pack extra gear to enhance the audio performance of the included video gear. Several have stereo synthesizers that give a dual-channel effect from a monaural source. Some carry surround-sound processors to duplicate the effect of theater sound systems. Technic's AV500 system passes on the equalizer in favor of the latter two audio enhancers.

The super-system can get as super-duper as you wish. You'll even find systems that go the full mile with digital audio and video signal processors. JVC's XM910-AV, for example, even contains a video graphic synthesizer that turns audio signals into colorful monitor displays. These devices add a dash of esoterica to products that already smack of component one-upmanship.

One final point: don't buy a super-system that doesn't let you decode stereo television (MTS) broadcasts. Some pack the decoding power in the monitor/receiver while others include it in an external tuner or the VCR. Either way, what good is it to invest in "everything you'll ever need to enjoy audio and video" when you'll ultimately have to go out and buy yet another add-on?

ABOUT OUR CHART

To qualify as a super-system for the accompanying chart, a system had to combine audio components (including an integrated amplifier) with a monitor, monitor/receiver, or projection TV and at least one other piece of video equipment (a VCR and/or optical laser player). The price represents the sum of the suggested list prices of the various components. Note that many of the following systems can be constructed in many ways, with a variety of other company-made components as options.

SHAKESPEARE

continued from page 69

That less successful works are around when better ones exist is galling.

KINGS ROW

Laurence Olivier's *Henry V* is often called the greatest Shakespeare film ever made. It justifies the enthusiasm. In an authentic start, he opens the film in the Globe, Shakespeare's own theatre, before a rowdy Elizabethan audience enjoying the low comedy of the first few scenes.

Soon he moves out of the theatre and traditionally stages the major middle scenes.

It all serves his interpretive ends, making this jingoistic rabble-rouser perfect propaganda to encourage the war-weary English of 1944 "once more unto the breach." Olivier brilliantly justifies World War II in terms of the larger Rights of Man, broadening the metaphor of Henry V's and England's right to France into a duty to fight fascism. It is a first class effort, romantic and intellectual, something hard to achieve even with more suitable Shakespearean material.

Olivier's other interpretive film, *Hamlet*, conveys a more personal portrait of the Dane's dilemma. It cuts out everything not relevant to Olivier's psychological slant, even the political quandary so important



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For additional information circle No. 52 on Reader Service Card. in the full text. Olivier's Hamlet presents both sides of his problem directly and simply. He's in control all the time. He just can't figure out the best course of action.

Olivier's approach works beautifully as entertainment. By reducing the play to its psychological bones, Olivier deepens our identification with Hamlet, while staging some of the best sword fights outside a swashbuckler. His supporting cast, including Jean Simmons as Ophelia, is superb. The whole, still regarded as sacrilegious in some circles, is the product of a real show-

Also sacrilegious, but ■ hoot, is Max Reinhardt's 1935 A Midsummer Night's Dream (Key), made in Hollywood with a supremely Hollywood cast-Dick Powell and Olivia de Havilland as two of the lovers. Mickey Rooney (then seven years old) as Puck, and James Cagney and Joe E. Brown as two of the menials. There are lots of fairies, Mendelssohn's music, ballets, and an amazing campiness. It is so bizarre it works. Where a half-baked traditional film would fall on its face, this strange, inappropriate beast just takes off.

The two Olivier films are only on CED disks, which highlights the great flaw in Shakespearean video. Despite the wealth available, there's not enough. Missing from the home video library are such film classics as Welles' and Olivier's Othello. Welles' Falstaff, the Tony Richardson/Nicol Williamson Hamlet, Olivier's television Merchant of Venice and King Lear, the PBS Great Performances' Much Ado About Nothing, the Meryl Streep/Raul Julia Taming of the Shrew or other New York Shakespeare Festival productions, and the BBC Shakespeare Plays (although Time-Life rents these to schools).

It's frustrating to think about these omissions, but, until more of Shakespeare's plays arrive on tape, enough is available to keep Bardophiles beguiled. V

SELECTED VIDEOGRAPHY

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

1973. Charlton Heston, Hildegarde Neil, Fernando Rey; dir. Charlton Heston. 150m. (PG) \$59.95. Embassy,

AS YOU LIKE IT

1936. B&W. Laurence Olivier, Elisabeth Bergner, Leon Quartermann; dir. Paul Czinner. 96m. \$29.95. Video Yesteryear.

HAMLET

1948. Laurence Olivier, Jean Simmons, Peter Cushing; dir. Laurence Olivier. 153m. CED. \$29.95. RCA.

1945. Laurence Olivier, Robert Newton, Leslie Banks; dir. Laurence Olivier. 137m. CED, \$29.95. RCA.

JULIUS CAESAR

1970. John Gielgud, Charlton Heston, Jason Robards Jr., Richard Chamberlain; dir. Stuart Birge. 116m. \$59.95. Republic.

1948. B&W. Orson Welles, Jeanette Nolan, Dan O'Herlihy; dir. Orson Welles. 105m. \$59.95. Republic.

MACRETH

1971. Jon Finch, Nicholas Selby, Francesca Annis; dir. Roman Polanski. 100m. Hi \$59.95. RCA/Columbia.

MACBETH

1954. B&W. Maurice Evans, Judith Anderson, House Jameson; dir. George Schaefer. 103m. \$24.95. Video Yestervear.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

1935. B&W. Mickey Rooney, Dick Powell, Olivia de Havilland, James Cagney; dir. Max Reinhardt. 117m. \$59.95. Key.

1922. B&W. Emil Jannings, Werner Kraus, Lya de Putti; dir. Dimitri Buschowetzki. 81m. \$29.95. Video Yesteryear.

1955. Laurence Olivier, Ralph Richardson, John Gielgud, Claire Bloom; dir. Laurence Olivier. 138m. \$39.95. Embassy.

ROMEO AND JULIET

1968. Leonard Whiting, Olivia Hussey, Michael York, Milo O'Shea; dir. Franco Zeffirelli. 138m. \$59.95. LV. \$29.95. Paramount.

ROMEO AND JULIET

1954. Laurence Harvey, Susan Shentall, John Gielgud; dir. Renato Castellani. 138m. \$66.95. Embassy.

SHAKESPEARE: SOUL OF AN AGE

1962. Documentary. Michael Redgrave, Ralph Richardson; dir. Guy Blanchard. 51m. \$29,95. Warner.

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

1967. Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, Michael York, Cyril Cusack; dir. Franco Zeffirelli, 126m. \$59.95. RCA/Columbia.

1983. Efrem Zimbalist Jr., William Hootkins, Nicholas Hammond; dir. William Woodman. 126m. \$99.95. Kultur.

THE TRAGEDY OF ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

1985. Lynn Redgrave, Timothy Dalton, Anthony Geary; dir. Lawrence Carra. 183m. \$99,95, Kultur.

THE TRAGEDY OF KING RICHARD II

1982. David Birney, Paul Shenar, John McLiam; dir. William Woodman. 172m. \$99.95. Kultur.

THE TRAGEDY OF MACBETH

1981. Jeremy Brett, Piper Laurie, Simon MacCorkindale; dir. Arthur Allan Seidelman. 150m. \$99.95. Kultur.

THE TRAGEDY OF OTHELLO, MOOR OF VENICE

1984. William Marshall, Ron Moody, Jenny Agutter; dir. Franklin Melton. 195m. \$99.95. Kultur.

SOURCES

For key to abbreviations and address information on video companies, see "Directo-

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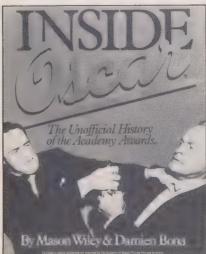
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August 1986 Video 137

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Inside Oscar

By Mason Wiley and Damien Bona Ballantine, N.Y., \$24.95.

Son of Golden Turkey Awards

By Harry and Michael Medved Villard, N.Y., \$10.95.

A few years ago critic Andrew Sarris griped, "The Oscar ceremony is now intentionally designed to inflict as much pain and suffering as possible on both its participants and its viewers." One can only wonder at the masochistic urge that must have gripped Mason Wiley and Damien Bona when they

decided to put together this colossal tribute to the Little Golden One. *Inside Oscar*, weighing in at four pounds and 850 pages, attempts nothing less than a comprehensive history of the movies, from Oscar's 1927 birth to Sally Field's gushing acceptance speech in 1985.

The Oscar race is more a matter of politics than of quality. People don't always win because they gave the best performance, but because they placed a lot of ads in *Variety*, or were overlooked many years ago, or had a serious illness during the voting. Fittingly, you won't find any discussion of cinematic merit in *Inside Oscar*.

The authors kick off each year in their survey by excavating contemporary writing about the year's big movies. They mine the gossip columns and trade papers to learn how Hollywood initially reacted to, say, Alfred Hitch-

cock or John Wayne. Many of the remarks, such as Joyce Haber's evaluation of Ali MacGraw as "the biggest female star since Marilyn Monroe," are hilarious in hindsight.

Then comes the politicking, as stars and studios grovel for the Academy's attention. You'll be astonished at the embarrassing lengths folks go to just to win a nomination. The most pathetic case is Chill Wills. nominated in 1960 for The Alamo, who bought ads listing every member of the Academy. "Win, lose, or draw, you're all my cousins and I love you all," vowed the ad copy. Groucho Marx responded with his own ad: "Dear Mr. Chill Wills, I am delighted to be your cousin, but I voted for Sal Mineo."

Finally, we come to "The Big Night" sections, blow-byblow recaps of each Academy Award ceremony, including lists of every winner, nominee, and presenter. Unfortunately, the descriptions are as anticlimactic as the Oscar shows. Oscar night, alas, is one of those All-American extravaganzas, like the Super Bowl and Election Night, that always fail to live up to their hype. Every five years or so something exciting happens (Vanessa Redgrave, Marlon Brando's Indian proxy, a streaker), but not often enough to enliven the ponderous accounts presented here.

The tedious nature of the spectacle bogs down what could have been a lively Hollywood history, and Wiley and Bona don't have the style or wit necessary to conquer Oscar's shortcoming. Their writing is as bland as a dissertation on the evolution of

pudding. Had Wiley and Bona been less daunted and dazzled, and more opinionated and irreverent, *Inside Oscar* would be a rowdier entertainment and a worthwhile addition to your library.

Harry and Michael Medved clearly have more fun chronicling Hollywood's foibles than its finest hours. Their first *Golden Turkey Awards* book is a cult classic, noted most for reviving the reputation of Ed Wood Jr. and his masterpiece, *Plan Nine from Outer Space. Son of Golden Turkey Awards* is a worthy sequel, every bit as funny and mindboggling.

The awards this time include the Most Primitive Male Chauvinist Fantasy (such as Voyage to the Planet of Prehistoric Women and Fire Maidens from Outer Space), Most Idiotic Ad Lines ("See Jane Russell in 3-D; She'll Knock Both Your Eyes Out!"), and Most Shamelessly Derivative Title for a Pornographic Film (Sperms of Endearment, On Golden Blonde).

We meet transvestite bikers, pistol-packing chimps, and a giant killer eyeball from outer space. Son Of also features a rogue's gallery of B-movie stalwarts, from Frankie Avalon to Pia Zadora. The enterprise benefits from the Medved brothers' appropriate sarcasm and their underhanded appreciation for the glories of junk.

I hope Hollywood someday will have enough of a sense of humor about itself to honor its worst excesses. An annual Golden Turkeys ceremony would be the ideal antidote to the Academy's yearly back-patting orgy. It would surely be much more entertaining.

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Off the Air

The Last Word

The Captain Unscrambled

By Bob Brewin

Are backyard earth station owners mad enough at signal scrambling to fight back with scrambling of their own? Back in April it looked that way when the self-styled Captain Midnight snatched Home Box Office's satellite transponder during a transmission of The Falcon and The Snowman to put up a message guaranteed to earn him grudging admiration from irate home dish owners and to strike fear into the country's satellite communication industry.

Captain Midnight's character-generated message, which lasted about four minutes, was succinct and to the point:

Good Evening HBO From Captain Midnight \$12.95 a month No way!

(Showtime/The Movie Channel beware.)

The implications of this crude message extended bevond a mere turf war between backyard dish owners and the scramble-crazy cable TV programming industry. The Achilles' heel of the satcom business-well known. but little talked about for vears-was finally public. The Captain was merely capitalizing on that weakness: with few exceptions, it is next to impossible to prevent satellite jamming and as easy to detect as finding a needle in a celestial haystack.

"We're talking about the fate of the entire telecommunications industry of the United States," said Steve Shulte, vice-president of operations for Showtime/TMC. "Any satellite is vulnerable: military, telephone, television."

If Shulte is right all twenty-five U.S. domestic communications satellites (18 C-band and seven Ku-band) are vulnerable to attack by space hackers. Also at risk are the six Canadian (three C-band and three Ku-band), and the two C-band Mexican birds in the North American arc.

The cable programmers laid part of the blame for the satellite attack on a magazine that serves the backyard market, *STV: The Home Satellite Television Magazine*, which ran a fictional article in late 1985 that outlined a guerrilla jamming campaign against HBO's scrambled signals. In the story HBO capitulates and descrambles its signal.

Shortly after the article ran, Eastern Microwave, Inc., which uplinks WOR-TV to cable systems as a "superstation," told the Federal Communications Commission that its satellite transmissions had been subject to "serious and debilitating" interference. In its little-noted filing, EMI cited the STV article as part of the problem. Showtime/TMC's Shulte went further. He called the article "an invitation for people to take the birds hostage. It's like printing a recipe for an atom bomb.'

STV editor Chris Schultheiss laid the recipe-printing label back on Shulte in a letter to Broadcasting Magazine. He observed that, while complaining about the article, Showtime was running Used Cars, a cult movie that de-

picted the same kind of satellite piracy Shulte deplored. Schultheiss told VIDEO that his magazine should not bear the onus for piracy. "People have known about this for years. The EMI case was not the first instance of deliberate interference," he said. "We have monitoring facilities (at STV's headquarters in Shelby, N.C.) that are constantly scanning the satellites. I can tell when someone is jamming. And I have sources. I know an individual who would find an empty transponder and use it to send CW (Morse Code) from the far north of this continent to the far south.'

After Captain Midnight struck, the FCC vowed to track down the pirate. As the search began it became obvious that Captain Midnight was far from a backyard tinkerer. The quality of the signal, the use of color bars and a professional-quality character generator quickly whittled the list of likely suspects from a million-plus backyard TVRO owners to someone working at one of the several hundred licensed commercial uplink facilities. An FCC spokeswoman said it would be "reasonable" to assume the Captain worked at such a facility-and on the graveyard shift (the Captain struck at 12:30 a.m. EST), when there is a lot of time to play and little supervision.

In fact, until the Captain's deliberate strike, most cases of satellite interference have been due to accidental interference by commercial uplinks, according to Jerry Farrell, a Hughes Communications VP. Hughes, which operates the cable industry's prime bird, Galaxy 1, said that about "once a week" an

authorized uplink facility will point its dish at the wrong Galaxy transponder, knocking out service for minutes or even hours.

In the case of Captain Midnight no one, naturally, has fessed up. Space hacking could get worse, according to NASA researcher George Kenhouse, as the low-powered C-band birds are replaced by higher-powered Ku-band satellites. "What's going to happen when Federal Express puts up a satellite designed to serve 1.2 meter dishes? Even smaller dishes will be able to interfere with this service."

The real threat to the country's satellite communications system may not come from backyards at all, according to Charlie Magin, a satellite specialist who monitors the domsats from the FCC's Field Operations Branch in Laurel, Maryland. Observing that terrorism takes many forms, Magin said "God forbid if the jamming comes from outside the country. How would we ever find it or stop it?" This is no idle speculation. The footprint of satellites serving North America runs from Thule, Greenland to the shoulder of South America, making the birds vulnerable to a determined pirate operating anywhere in those millions of square miles.

"We know how to counteract on the part of uplink operators, but we just don't know how to deal with guerrilla-type activity," said a clearly worried Wendell Bailey, vice president of science and technology at the National Cable Television Association. "I do know that those satellites up there are very vulnerable."

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